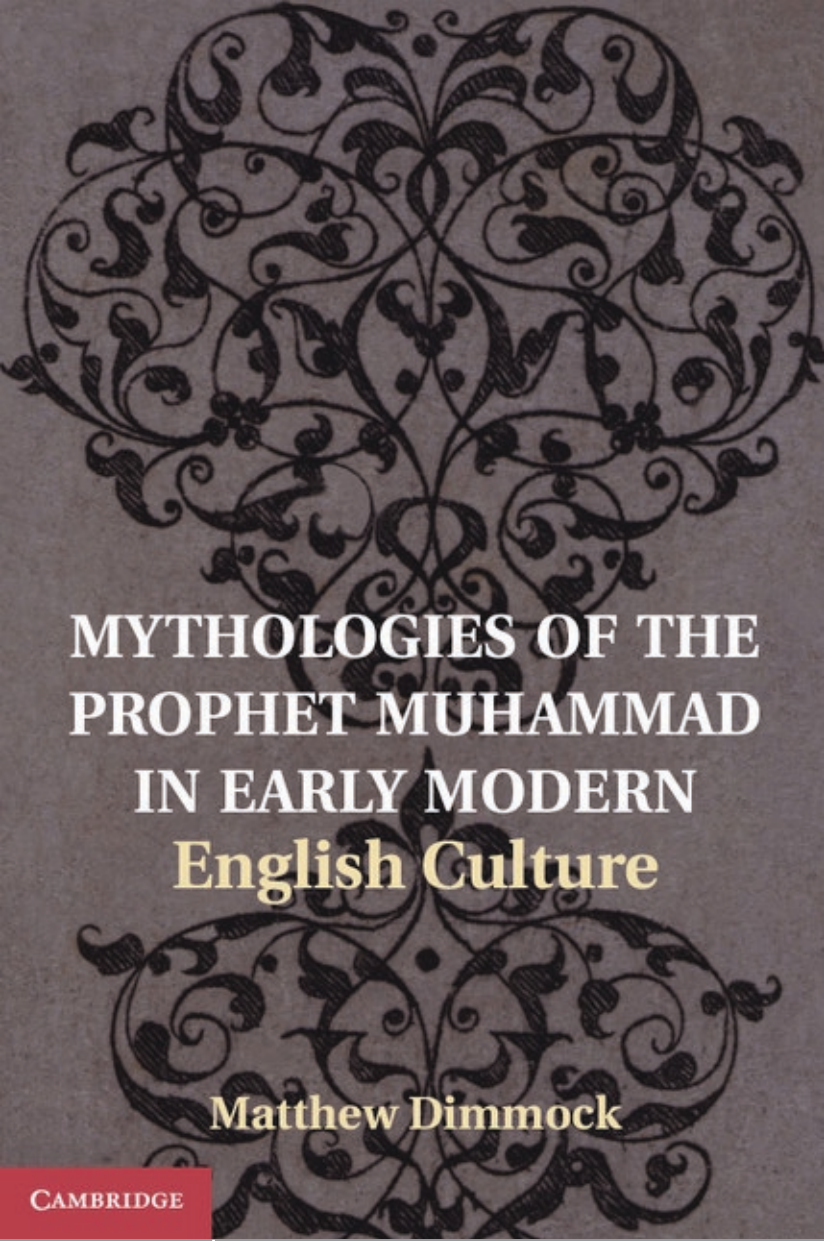


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MYTHOLOGIES OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH CULTURE

The figure of 'Mahomet' was widely known in early modern England. A grotesque version of the Prophet Muhammad, Mahomet was a product of vilification, caricature and misinformation placed at the centre of Christian conceptions of Islam. In *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture*, Matthew Dimmock draws on an eclectic range of early modern sources – literary, historical and visual – to explore the nature and use of Mahomet in a period bounded by the beginnings of print and the early Enlightenment. This fabricated figure and his spurious biography were endlessly recycled, but also challenged and vindicated, and the tales the English told about him offer new perspectives on their sense of the world – its geographies and religions, near and far – and their place within it. This book explores the role played by Mahomet in the making of Englishness, and reflects on what this might reveal about England's present circumstances.

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Dedicated to the memory of William Frederick Edwards:
artist, raconteur, publican, grandfather

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Preface

> The subject calls for more extended treatment; for the calumnies so long current in the West, false as they obviously are, have done great mischief to Muslims. These calumnies contain the early germs of the prejudices which, like a nightmare, still haunt the imagination of Europeans […]
>
> Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani (1911)[1]

In twenty-first-century Britain, as in the wider 'West', the Prophet Muhammad is more widely known than at any time in the past two centuries. His prominence has generated some strikingly contradictory assessments: ex–prime ministerial endorsement as 'an enormously civilising force', Papal reference to his supposed use of religious violence and the range of responses to the infamous and destructive Danish cartoon controversy are just a few examples.[2] In March 2011, the Florida pastor Terry Jones's burning of the Qur'ān and declared intent to 'stage a trial on the life of Muhammad' for 'crimes against humanity' briefly saturated worldwide press coverage and elicited reactions that included horror and indifference as well as, in some cases, support.[3] Yet despite Jones's opportunist claims to the contrary, Muhammad's recent prominence is nothing new. For a period of more than 250 years, from the late fifteenth to the early eighteenth century, he was a similarly familiar presence in the lives of English men and women.

This book is concerned with the life of the Prophet as it was imagined in early modern England from the beginnings of print to the stirrings of Enlightenment, but it is not a biography of the Prophet Muhammad. It is something quite different. In his recent overview of the *Sīra*, which (alongside the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth*) is the primary source of biographical traditions surrounding the Prophet, Tarif Khalidi sought to offer 'a kind of map of a literary tradition'.[4] Here I attempt something similar, but in mapping early English views, the terrain I seek to chart is instead scarred

by vilification, caricature and misinformation whose nature and extent I seek to clarify and analyse. Muslim biographical traditions thus play only a tangential role in this study, because English writers twisted them for polemical ends in a dominant medieval approach before unevenly reinstating them as a more self-consciously authentic 'Mahomet' surfaces in the early modern and Enlightenment periods. What follows is a study of the misrepresentation of a biography or, perhaps, the biography of a misrepresentation.

There can be no doubt that this material is controversial. Muhammad continues to have a vital presence in the lives of Muslims across the world as 'comforter, friend, intercessor' and 'family member'.[5] His life 'reminds the faithful of God's presence'.[6] Muhammad's denigration in the Christian traditions that concern this book depends on an assumption of his centrality within Islam. So Muhammad was reimagined as 'Mahomet', as an inversion of Christ, and 'Mahomet' became an evangelical tool, 'an essential disproof of the Islamic claim to revelation'.[7] In broader terms, the narrative of the life, whether as prophet, saint, warrior or monarch, had long been a primary conduit for the articulation of history and cultural value. Of all non-Christian lives known to late medieval English men and women, Mahomet's was by far the most familiar. It was almost continuously told and retold, often in wildly different circumstances. In a very different way, it was a vital presence in *their* lives.

The incendiary import of this life, its centrality to a vision of the wider world and the cultural assumptions that it carried – then as now – thus necessitate detailed study, the 'more extended treatment' demanded by Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani in my epigraph. What remains in the books, images, libraries and archives of these earlier periods testifies to the multifaceted history of Anglo-Muslim encounter. This book explores one of its central elements, often overlooked in recent critical studies, and does so in the hope that it will augment Khalidi's work and assist scholars interested in understanding 'Western', and particularly British, fabrications of Islam and how that history resonates today. This book is thus concerned with the uses of Mahomet in early modern England: how this fabricated figure was created, recycled and contested. I want to explore what this tells us of the British in the making, and how it might help us to understand our present circumstances.

Those readers requiring a detailed biography of the Prophet are referred to some important recent examples, and to scholarly work on the sources of Muhammad's biographical tradition and the role of myth within it.[8] There are, however, some elements of the classical account of

Muhammad's life that will appear repeatedly in different forms in the following pages as pivotal points in a Christian tradition of confutation. It seems useful to highlight them here. Born into an eminent but not prosperous family around 570, Muhammad's first few years were unsettled, and by the age of eight he had lost both his mother and his grandfather, his father Abdulla dying six months before Muhammad was born.[9] Sent to live with his uncle Abu Taleb, a merchant, the young Muhammad travelled widely, and some traditions suggest that at a point between the ages of nine and thirteen his future as a prophet was predicted by Bahira, a monk or hermit. He married a wealthy widow, Khadijah, at the age of twenty-five, and lived in Mecca for the next fifteen years before receiving the first of many revelations in a cave on nearby Mount Hira. Once he began preaching in Mecca he suffered at the hands of various tribal factions, and entered self-imposed exile in Medina in 622 (a flight known as the *Hijra*). Here he gathered followers and united various tribes before returning to Mecca as conqueror. He died in Medina in 632.[10]

The most regularly reproduced life of the Prophet circulating in medieval Christendom took these elements and distorted them to create a grotesque. The result – Mahomet – had been largely generated in the polarised circumstances of the eleventh and twelfth centuries by a potent combination of Muslim converts to Christianity, Christian travellers to Muslim lands and zealous propagandising clergy. The life that emerged was then represented as truth to early Christian audiences.[11] A necessary distinction is maintained throughout this book between the Prophet Muhammad of Muslim biographical traditions and Mahomet, the composite figure of Christian mythology. Many different forms of the transliterated name Muhammad had been used by Christian writers, including the medieval 'Mahun', 'Mahound' and 'Macomete', 'Machomete' in the earliest printed texts and 'Mahumet' in the mid-sixteenth century. The newly standardised Mahomet, introduced in the late sixteenth century, would remain in common use into the early twentieth century. As a clear signal of the fabricated nature of Mahomet in English writing of the early modern period, this name will be used throughout. If this book is in any way biographical, it is concerned with the multiple lives of Mahomet, this Christian construction of the Prophet Muhammad.

The period between the arrival of William Caxton's printing press in Westminster in 1476 and the publication of George Sale's monumental translation of the Qur'ān in London in 1734 encompasses decisive religious, political and social change in England, with the origins of modernity and the beginnings of empire. All this was experienced in dynamic

interchange with Islamic empires, as recent critics have demonstrated.[12] Yet there was no Islam for most English men and women in this influential period, nor was there any Muhammad.[13] There was only Mahomet and Mahometanism. It is an important distinction to make, and it is with Mahomet that this book is concerned.

Throughout the book, quotations from primary sources have remained unchanged (aside from the silent regularisation of the long, or medial, s). When quoting from the Qur'ān or the Bible, specific editions are cited in the notes.

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This book would never have existed at all without an initial spur from two very different sources – my colleague George Walter and my grandfather Bill Edwards – both of whom were irresistibly enthusiastic about the initial idea. I am deeply grateful to both, and it is a great sadness that the latter did not live to see the book completed. I also owe a considerable debt of thanks to the Leverhulme Trust, whose award of a Research Fellowship for the academic year 2007–8 allowed valuable space to research and write, as did the term's leave I was given by the University of Sussex in the previous year. Gerald MacLean went well beyond what I could have reasonably asked of a scholar or a friend in reading and commenting on drafts and ideas, and I cannot thank him enough; Andrew Hadfield, Bill McEvoy and Matthew Birchwood also read sections of the book in draft and made typically insightful comments. If there is clarity in what follows, it is largely thanks to them and to the careful and astute reports presented by the anonymous readers of the manuscript for Cambridge University Press; any errors that remain are my own. The patience and commitment of Ray Ryan, my editor at Cambridge University Press, and his team have also been greatly appreciated.

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The scholarly environment in which I work has helped enormously in a project that crosses disciplinary boundaries. Colleagues and students in the Centre for Early Modern Studies at the University of Sussex, some already mentioned earlier, have encouraged, cajoled, entertained, informed and challenged at every stage, and I see this book as the fruit of a series of collaborations that are ongoing. The support of family and close friends has also been invaluable. They have done me the great service of ignoring the book at the right moments and seeming interested at the right moments. Special acknowledgement should go (once again) to Jerry Brotton, but also to William McEvoy, Danny Millum and my brother, Dominic Dimmock. Particularly skilled in this regard has been Tierney White, who has uncomplainingly endured a book (and all that goes with it) that has been 'in preparation' for as long as we have known each other. I couldn't have written it without her, and to her must go my final, and deepest thanks.

Introduction: Fabricating Mahomet

Mahomet was well known in early modern England. Routinely rejected, reclaimed, defamed, defended and used as a polemical tool, in his various forms Mahomet could be imagined as French, Spanish, German, Arabian or Persian, and he might be Muslim, Protestant or Roman Catholic – but most importantly for this book, he was repeatedly imagined as English, and summoned to appear in England. The bewildering variety of guises in which Mahomet appears in English writings presents a distinctly new perspective on this period. It offers a corrective to those whose work has focused on early modern representations of 'Islam' (as well as 'Turks' and 'Moors'), a reminder that for English readers and writers there was no Islam or Muslims, only Mahomet and Mahometans. Mahomet and 'his' religion were not simply something alien or 'other' but might be imagined as a mutually reinforcing monotheism or even, in some early Enlightenment writing, as an authentic true Christianity. Shared Abrahamic roots connected the two religions, making Mahomet and his doctrine uncannily familiar. What we now call Islam became the 'dark double' of Christianity, an encroaching other world, a mirror image enabling a sustained reflection on Christian faults and Christian depravity.[1]

Mahometanism had no stable early modern form in the Christian imagination. Instead it was generated out of the competing theological positions, new media, apocalyptic prophesy and fantasies of violence, monstrosity and luxury that informed English conceptions of national and individual identity. Mahomet was the polysemic and enigmatic figure at its centre, heir to a sense of identity inherited from medieval saints' lives. In the lurid elaboration of his imagined personal life he becomes one of the first 'celebrities' of early print. Each European vernacular made him anew in this new medium, but in a post-Reformation English context he gains an extraordinary vitality because – like Henry VIII and

most of his successors – Mahomet was simultaneously a spiritual and secular leader.

Writing about Mahomet and Mahometanism in England in these years was never simply about engaging with those beyond Christendom. It offered a means of cementing and projecting, but also critiquing, English political and religious structures. The emergence and development of an English Mahomet further challenges a twenty-first-century critical impulse to project the Orientalist paradigm backwards; instead, it was the articulation of an uneven conceptual engagement with Islamic peoples, and a complex and unstable post-Reformation world.

1. DECLAIMING MAHOMET

One of the more curious stunts related by the English traveller and self-proclaimed *fakir* Thomas Coryat offers a typically idiosyncratic, but nonetheless revealing, illustration of how the life of Mahomet might be employed. Finding himself before a substantial crowd in 'a Citie called *Moltan* in the *Easterne India*' (now Multan in the Punjab province of Pakistan), Coryat delivered the following oration:

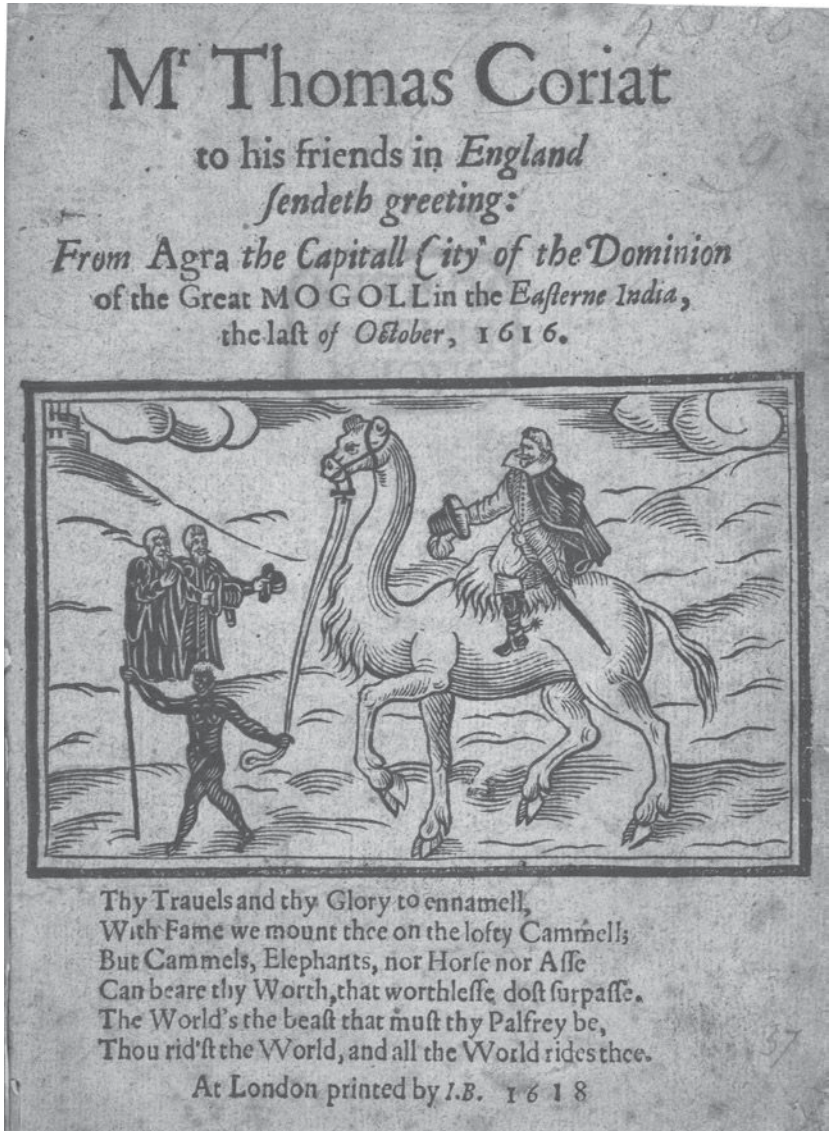
> What, thy *Mahomet* was from whom thou dost deriue thy Religion, assure thy selfe I know better then any one of the *Mahometans* amongst many millions: yea all the particular circumstances of his life and death, his Nation, his Parentage, his driuing Camels through *Egipt*, *iria*, and *Palestina*, the marriage of his Mistris, by whose death he raised himselfe from a very base and contemtible estate to great honor and riches, his manner of cozening the sottish people of *Arabia,* partly by a tame Pigeon that did fly to his eare for meat, and partly by a tame Bull that hee fed by hand euery day, with the rest of his actions both in peace and warre: I know aswell as if I had liued in his time, or had beene one of his neighbours in *Mecca,* the truth whereof if thou didst know aswell, I am perswaded thou wouldest spit in the face of thy *Alcaron*, and trample it vnder thy feete, and bury it vnder a Iaxe, a booke of that strange and weake matter.[2]

Coryat was on the second and last of his great peregrinations on foot – he was England's famed 'legstretcher' – and had arrived in Multan by way of Jerusalem, Aleppo, Ur and Isfahan, recalling this extraordinary confrontation from the relative comfort of Agra, the capital of the Mughal Empire, before thereafter joining the English embassy to Jahangir's peripatetic court in Ajmer in July 1615.[3] By this point he had covered, by his own estimation, some 2,700 miles 'afoot'. The scale and nature of this undertaking are astonishing, and Coryat was certainly atypical, carefully cultivating his own oddness in print, as his titlepage image riding a camel

in full English garb demonstrates (Figure 1). His particularly idiosyncratic perspective has been characterised as an endearingly engaged and sympathetic approach to the languages, customs and traditions of those places he passed through and recorded.[4] All the more surprising, then, is that his attitude to Islam and its prophet was just the opposite of this. In the spectrum of approaches to Mahomet available to early modern English men and women, Coryat occupies the hostile end, regurgitating stale but popular mythologies that were already more than four centuries old in 1615.

The circumstances of the Jacobean English in India offer a sense of how divergent such attitudes might be. This Multan set-piece presents Coryat with an opportunity to play out proudly in person an oft-repeated fantasy of confrontation and confutation that centred on the presumed 'truth' about Islam. Triggered by the accusation that he was a 'Giaur' – an infidel – in his 'extempore' response he becomes a hero in the popular romance mould, defending Christ and destroying the false god Mahomet. His first conceit is to demonstrate that his Muslim accuser is no 'Musulman' at all, for in its true Arabic sense that word 'cannot be properly applied to a Mahometan but onely to a Christian'.[5] In a self-satisfying disputational reversal, it is Coryat and his fellow believers who are the true Muslims. This is the context for the opening quotation, in which Coryat demonstrates just how false he considers Islam to be – and in refusing to allow his opponents to refer to themselves as 'Musulmen' he deftly reframes Islam as the religion of Mahomet and renames it with the Christian term 'Mahometanism'.[6] Briefly relating this episode in his own narrative of the English embassy, the chaplain Edward Terry imagines it as a disputation with 'much heate on both sides' (in the original account there is little interaction) and repeats it as a curiosity, an example of Coryat's eccentric virtuosity, focusing solely on this canny inversion of 'Musulman' because Terry 'thought it would have made … [his] Reader smile'.[7]

Yet there is a serious purpose here. Coryat's strategy requires that he position his audience as Mahometans and not as 'Musulmans'. The centrality of Mahomet as progenitor and prototype opens up a vast body of polemic, much of it stemming from Peter the Venerable's twelfth-century Toletano-Cluniac corpus, the *Risalat al-Kindi*, and the work of Riccoldo da Montecroce, which uses these assumptions to fashion a whole mythology.[8] It is this pseudo-biography that Coryat rehearses here – 'all the particular circumstances of his life and death', including Mahomet's cynical manipulation of both his wife and the people of Arabia, his elaborately false miracles and his fabrication of the Alcoran with the help of a



Mr Thomas Coriat
to his friends in *England*
ſendeth greeting:
From Agra *the Capitall City of the Dominion*
of the Great MOGOL in the *Eaſterne India*,
the laſt *of October*, 1616.

Thy Trauels and thy Glory to ennamell,
With Fame we mount thee on the lofty Cammell;
But Cammels, Elephants, nor Horſe nor Aſſe
Can beare thy Worth, that worthleſſe doſt ſurpaſſe.
The World's the beaſt that muſt thy Palfrey be,
Thou rid'ſt the World, and all the World rides thee.

At London printed by *I.B.* 1618

Figure 1. Thomas Coryat, *Mr Thomas Coriat to his friends in England sendeth greeting* (London: I. B., 1618) – titlepage. © The British Library Board, C.32.d.6.

renegade monk named Sergius.[9] Coryat's intention is to demonstrate how such a man could never be the legitimate prophet of God. It is a consequence of these foundational deceptions that Mahometan prayers, with their 'vain repetitions & diuers other prophane fooleries […] doe euen stinke before God' while Christian prayers – whose veracity Coryat can prove – like 'a sweete smelling sacrifice are acceptable to God'.[10]

Some revealing assumptions underpin Coryat's diatribe against Mahomet and Mahometans. The brazenly confident assertion that he, along with any educated Christian, knows the details of Mahomet's life 'better then any one of the *Mahometans* amongst many millions' is remarkable (reminiscent, perhaps, of later 'Orientalist' writings) and demonstrates the power of Christian mythologies surrounding the prophet, solidified and repeatedly affirmed through scribal reproduction, anthologisation, translation and transferal to print (as detailed in Chapter 1). The antiquity of this Christian life of Mahomet, coupled with its basis in the work of Muslim converts, generated its supposed authenticity and dominant authority.[11] Indeed, Coryat's assertion that he knows the details of Mahomet's life as if he 'had been one of his neighbours' asserts a spurious objectivity apparently unclouded by polemic or propaganda. So Coryat can be confident in the veracity of his knowledge, even when confronted with a substantial crowd of Indian Muslims and, indeed, the millions around the world, because he has no reason to doubt it – everything he has read confirms the established biography of Mahomet. He can also be confident that he knows the life of their prophet better than they do because of the persistent notion that from the beginning common Muslims had been lied to and defrauded by their own priests. Later in the century, Alexander Ross would justify the publication of the first translation of the Qur'ān into English, *The Alcoran of Mahomet* (1649), by affirming exactly this. 'Even their own Wise Men are ashamed' of their holy text, he argues,

> and are sorry it should be translated into any other language: for they are unwilling that their grand Hypocrite should be unmasked, or that the Visard of his pretended holiness should be taken off, whose filthy nakedness must appear when he is devested: they know that words and works of darkness cannot endure the light.[12]

Coryat is attacking the fabricated religion of his 'pseudo-Musulman' disputant to prove his religion false, aggrandising himself and attempting literally to enlighten his assailant. This enlightenment is a final element of the exchange: although Coryat deliberately avoids sectarian language

(apart from a revealing reference to 'superstitious mumbling' in prayer), his mode of address and the assumptions on which it is based point towards a particularly English and Protestant evangelism. Preaching in London in late 1586, Meredith Hanmer called on the English to 'Let your light so shine before men', and those Muslims, 'seeing our good workes, may glorifie our father which is in heaven'.[13] If that was Coryat's intention, he had little chance to pursue it. He was astute enough to deliver this declamation in India, where 'a Christian may speake much more freely then hee can in any other Mahometan Country in the world', and not in Turkey or Persia where 'they would haue rosted me vpon a spitt' for the same speech, and delivers it in Italian, which (as luck would have it) only the Punjabi Indian who called him 'Giaur' could understand.[14]

Although apparently liked and valued by both Terry and Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to Jahangir's court, Coryat triggered difficulties in Ajmer, not least because of his inability to adhere to protocol, his fearless self-promotion and his aggressive brand of Protestant Christianity. This was a potent and disruptive combination, particularly in the context of an embassy at a Muslim Imperial court whose instructions were simply to obtain favoured mercantile status. In such circumstances, religious difference was subservient to political and trading concerns, as in earlier English relationships with Moroccan, Ottoman and Persian empires.[15] Any English problems with Mahomet were necessarily (and sometimes ingeniously) overlooked – not every Englishman was as belligerent as Coryat when confronted by Mahomet and Mahometans, as this book demonstrates.[16] Indeed, in total opposition to Coryat, many writers expressed an uncomfortable awareness of how little the Christian world really knew about this elusive figure.

Edward Terry's recollections of Coryat in India reveal one final incident. Discussing the nature of the Mahometan call to prayer in his *A Voyage to East-India* leads him to recall a similarly antagonistic confrontation:

> But to returne againe to those *Mahometan Priests,* who out of zeale doe so often proclaim their *Mahomet. Tom Coryat* upon a time having heard their *Moolaas* often (as before) so to cry got him upon an high place directly opposite to one of those Priests, and contradicted him thus. *La alla illa alla, Hasaret Eesa Benalla*, that is, no God, but one God, *and the Lord Christ the Son of God*, and further added that *Mahomet* was an *Impostor*: and all this he spake in their owne language as loud as possibly he could, in the eares of many *Mahometans* that heard it.[17]

Once more we are encouraged to marvel at Coryat's facility with language alongside his capacity for curious stunts that combined English Christian bravery with an unpredictable recklessness. Yet it is revealing that Terry refrains from simply commending Coryat's 'zeale' here, and instead explicitly leaves it to the reader to judge his conduct. As Coryat himself had indicated when reflecting on his own earlier encounter, Terry does acknowledge that undertaking such an attempt 'in many other places of *Asia*, would have cost him his life with as much *torture* as cruelty could have *invented*'. Instead, perhaps fittingly, the locals seem to have taken Coryat 'for a mad-man, and so let [him] alone'.[18]

Thomas Coryat's precarious and extreme position in relation to both Thomas Roe's embassy and wider English attitudes towards Mahometanism corresponds with Terry's elusive account of him. The ambivalence here is in part a consequence of Coryat's own abrasive personality, but it also typifies English responses to Mahomet. As this brief account of Coryat, Roe and Terry begins to demonstrate, when written by English men and (less frequently) women in a broadly defined early modern period between 1450 and 1750, Mahomet becomes a defining and often divisive figure. Aside from those celebrated individuals in the interconnected theological and political worlds of Christendom – Biblical patriarchs, saints, potentates – he is the most well known and frequently invoked in this three-hundred-year span. Almost everyone knew of Mahomet. He is depicted in numerous divergent forms in poetry, drama and prose of different genres; he is invoked from pulpits, related in stories, declaimed by travellers and polemically paralleled with Christ, Luther, various popes and almost every English monarch of the period. His image appears in political and religious tracts and pamphlets, in chronicle histories and in English prayerbooks, and hangs on the wall of at least one noble household. In early modern and enlightenment England he is ubiquitous to the point that his invocation becomes a shorthand for a whole range of associations – his Christian biography so familiar that William Shakespeare's King Charles in *Henry VI part 1* (1591) can offhandedly exclaim to Joan of Arc, 'Was Mahomet inspired by a dove? / Thou with an eagle art inspired then' (1.2.140–1); or Thomas Middleton's Vindici in *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) can casually remark on the frustrations in persuading a woman from chastity, since 'Many a Maide has turn'd to Mahomet, / With easier working' (2.2.27–8).[19]

II. ESTABLISHING A MYTHOLOGY OF MAHOMET

The centrality of Mahomet makes it all the more surprising that he has been largely ignored by the literary critics and historians of this period. This is in some respects a consequence of the ways in which academics divide up history before 1750 – broadly between medieval, early modern and Enlightenment periods – and how a narrative of dominant Christian attitudes towards Islam is stretched across these chronological blocks. There has been a tendency in literary and historical work to assume that the early medieval period, from the earliest recorded non-Muslim encounters with Islam (c. 620) to the circumstances of the Third Crusade (1189–92) and its associated propagandist drive, generates a Christian mythology of Islam that completely dominates Christian discourse until at least the recalibration of the later Enlightenment period. Within this basic narrative a number of writers become canonised, even in a specifically English context: John of Damascus, those texts assembled by Peter the Venerable in the early twelfth century (including the first translation of the Qur'ān completed by Robert of Ketton in 1143), the *Risalat al-Kindi*, Riccoldo da Montecroce, Petrus Alfonsi, the *Chansons*, John Mandeville, Dante Alighieri, Jacobus de Voragine, Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther, Christopher Marlowe, William Bedwell, Alexander Ross and the anonymous translator of *The English Alcoran*, Humphrey Prideaux, Voltaire and George Sale. These works (and others) are indeed central to any examination of Christian-Muslim engagement before 1750, but focussing on them exclusively means they are not read critically but rather enlisted to confirm a narrative that cannot reflect the complexity of England's multiple encounters with Islam across this period. All too often the 'early modern' element of pre-1750 history has been glossed over, assumed to be dominated by unchallenged stereotypes from earlier periods, merely a lull before the ferment of the Enlightenment.

The early modern lacuna is particularly pronounced when examining constructions of Mahomet. Those few works that have attempted to cover the full span of Christian engagement with the Prophet Muhammad, most recently Clinton Bennett's *In Search of Muhammad* (1998) and Minou Reeves' *Muhammad in Europe: A Thousand Years of Western Myth-Making* (2000), rely on an assumption of relentless hostility.[20] Bennett's text is concerned with a tradition of consistent misrepresentation only in the context of promoting inter-faith engagement, but Reeve's text is firmly based on a tradition of 'consistent distortion', which leads her to assert that the 'demonization of Muhammad lived on in new variations

throughout the Renaissance and Reformation' while 'the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason also failed to change the stereotype'. It is not until the 'highly contradictory assessment of Muhammad' that emerges in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that any variation in this pattern develops.[21] The suggestion of defining, unchanging and relentless vitriol towards the Prophet is, I argue, overly simplistic.

The problems of periodisation, coupled with prevailing assumptions about Christian/Islamic engagement, have further had a profound effect on the contours of the field. A few foundational studies appeared in the early and late twentieth century that suggested the complexity of Anglo-Islamic exchanges: Samuel Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937) alongside Byron Porter Smith's *Islam in English Literature* (1939), and Dorothee Metlitzki's *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (1977) with Susan Skilliter's *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey* (1977).[22] Building on this work, recent scholarship has sought to challenge prevailing assumptions about early modern encounter, and a critical push to reclaim 'other' voices was a key element of the New Historicist/Cultural Materialist project of the late twentieth century. The complex alignments generated in the post-9/11 world have further galvanised critical enquiry.

Literary critics and historians working on the relationship between Islam and early modern England (and/or a wider Christianity) over the past decade or so have considerably broadened the field. There are those who have explicitly contested or rethought the application of Edward Said's *Orientalism* to the early modern period, in particular Nabil Matar, Gerald MacLean, Jonathan Burton and Daniel Vitkus. A reconsideration of more specific elements of England's writing of Islam or Muslims has followed and includes work by Emily Bartels, Matthew Birchwood, Linda McJannet, Margaret Meserve and Benedict Robinson. Others have focussed on the implications and character of exchange and encounter between cultures, such as Jerry Brotton and Barbara Fuchs. All have approached the subject in innovative and informed ways, but have largely oriented their studies around ethno-religious identities – the figure of the 'Turk', for instance – to the exclusion of a detailed examination of religious engagement and Mahomet's place within it.[23]

Mahomet may be a necessary component in notions of Mahometan 'Turks', 'Moors' and 'Persians', but these groups are absolutely central to early modern English conceptions of Mahomet. Expanding commercial engagement with the Ottomans, Morocco and Persia pressed their representatives (and their faith) to an increasing cultural prominence in the later sixteenth century, particularly following the official codification of

those relationships that began with the Anglo-Ottoman 'capitulations' in 1580.[24] Large numbers of Christian converts to Mahometanism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only made the refutation of Mahomet more urgent.[25] It was, however, the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in May 1453 and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire that brought the 'Turk' and his idol/god Mahomet into the despatches, sermons, churches and thus the imaginative landscape of late-fifteenth-century English men and women. The fall of the city signalled 'a decisive shift in international political power' but also marked the destruction of a legendary and hitherto inviolable Christian bastion.[26] It was endlessly replayed in text and illustration. Reflecting on the crisis, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini lamented that one of 'the two lights of Christendom' had been extinguished: 'Now the Turks hang over our very heads'.[27] As part of an attempt to regain the city five years later, Piccolomini (now Pope Pius II) commissioned Juan de Torquemada to write a book attacking the errors of Mahomet, *Contra errores perfidi Machometi* (1459).[28] To attack the 'Turk's' religion was to attack the 'Turk'. More than any other single factor, it was the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century expansion of the Ottoman 'Turkish' Empire that propelled Mahomet into a wider Christian consciousness.

The difficulty in establishing a critical vocabulary in which to discuss early modern engagements with Mahomet, Mahometans and Mahometanism reflects the instability of the terminology used in the period. The work that would seem to offer such a vocabulary, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), has instead been subjected to ongoing critique in the last two decades. Many have recognised Said's notion of an acquiescent 'East' engaged and contained by a dominant 'West' to be unsustainable in an early modern context. Similarly, as Jonathan Burton has recently noted, Said's sense of a broad 'discursive consistency' is difficult to maintain when confronted by the multiple forms and contexts of English encounters with the 'Orient'.[29] In the case of Mahomet, there is a range of discursive strands that have their own consistency, and these strands cross, unravel and reform over time. Nevertheless, Said's metaphor for the 'Orient' as a stage on which Western desires are dramatised is a useful conceit when approaching the figure of Mahomet, as are Said's concepts of citationality and supernatural providentialism, both of which play a key role in the formation and promulgation of Christian mythologies of Mahometanism, and which are nuanced in later chapters.[30] In this critical void, many critics have fallen back on terms like 'Turk' and 'Moor' which reproduce the polemical stereotyping of the playhouse, perhaps reflecting the ongoing dominance of Shakespeare in the wider field.

Two examples demonstrate the complexity of the issue. In October 1586, Meredith Hanmer presided over the public baptism of a 'Turk' at St Katharine's by the Tower. The sermon accompanying the event would be published by the following year.[31] For Hanmer the destiny of this 'Turk' represents English imperial ambition and the apocalyptic inevitability of infidel conversion to Protestant Christianity (conspicuously not idolatrous Roman Catholicism). Yet Chinano, the individual he baptises, is a Muslim born in Ottoman-controlled Greece, speaks only Spanish at the ceremony, and is rescued for English reclamation in Latin America. His multifaceted identity resists categorisation even as Hanmer labels him 'Saracen' and 'Turk', the former his religious identity, the latter his allegiance at birth. Hanmer negotiates such issues by generating his own terminology, and by devoting a third of his sermon to reproducing the life of Mahomet and then refuting him.[32]

The same strategy is at work in Thomas Newton's popular compendium *A Notable Historie of the Saracens* (1575), largely based on Celio Augustino Curione's *Sarracenicae historiae libri tres* (posthumously published in 1568).[33] The subtitle to this work promises that it will chart '*the originall beginning, continuaunce* and successe aswell of the Saracens, as well as *of Turkes, Souldans, Mamalukes, Assassines, Tartarians and Sophians*'. The mixing of terms here is curious, each with a different etymology, and each referring to a distinct geopolitical entity based largely on secular allegiance which is elided with ethnic and national factors. Yet for Newton all are connected through their common progenitors – the Saracens – and a common religion with which they are closely linked. That the subtitle goes on to include '*With a discourse of their Affaires and Actes from the* byrthe of Mahomet their first *peevish Prophet and founder for 700 yeeres space*' indicates the way in which Mahomet and his life authorise something like a 'discursive consistency' to an otherwise amorphous 'East'. There are numerous other examples in which narratives of Mahomet perform the same role – thus, in a typically contradictory fashion, an inconsistently written life offers a Saidian consistency to otherwise disparate peoples, concepts and places. In ways that have been overlooked in recent scholarship, Mahomet binds much of the non-Christian world together for the Christian writers of this period.

III. ANALYSING A MYTHOLOGY OF MAHOMET

Those scholars who have explored the shifting and unstable role of the prophet in the early modern period have largely done so at its margins.

There is a wealth of important scholarship concerning the final eighty years or so of this time span, for instance, with Matthew Birchwood's work on Ross, Stubbe and an English staging of Islam particularly notable.[34] Arabic studies in Northern Europe – and to a lesser extent Muhammad's odd position within them – have been comprehensively detailed by G. J. Toomer, with specific figures finely examined in Alastair Hamilton's work on William Bedwell and (with Francis Richard) on Andre du Ryer.[35] Ahmad Gunny has also recently produced important work concerning later French and English attitudes to Muhammad.[36] The curious but pivotal position occupied by Henry Stubbe in this field was cemented by James R. Jacob in his study of the man, his context and his writing in 1983, work extended in new directions to John Toland and beyond in Justin Champion's detailed and insightful book *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: the Church of England and its enemies, 1660–1730* (1992).[37]

The early end of the 1450–1750 period falls into the grey area between medieval and early modern and illustrates their stark difference. Medieval attitudes to Islam and the Prophet Muhammad have generated an extraordinarily rich critical literature. On images depicting Muhammad alone there is essential work by Walter Cahn, Michael Camille and, most recently, Debra Higgs Strickland.[38] On perceptions of Islam by medieval Christians the exemplary work of Norman Daniel, particularly in *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (1960) has rarely been superseded, but has been augmented by important contributions from Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Robert Hoyland, Dorothee Metlitzki, John Moorhead, Stefano Mula, Michael Paull, R. W. Southern and Kenneth Baxter Wolf, with Harmut Bobzin and Thomas E. Burman carrying their important studies into the Reformation.[39] In recent years the range, scope and depth of John Tolan's work has closely informed my own explorations in the field, particularly his model for the development of divergent idolatrous and heresiarchal representations of Muhammad.[40] While many of these writers do not agree on detail – and a number of their differences are recognised in the pages that follow – together these works demonstrate the vitality of medievalist study in this area, and the complex 'Mahometan' legacy bequeathed to later periods. However, John Tolan's recent essay, 'European Accounts of Muhammad's Life' in *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad* (2010), steps beyond the medieval to offer an ambitious pan-historical narrative. Although offering a useful introduction to the topic, Tolan takes a similar line to Minou Reeves in suggesting that aggressive misrepresentation defines the pre-Enlightenment period. He is surely right to suggest that the medieval 'vision of Muhammad as a

false prophet who forged a bogus revelation dominates European learned discourse well into the eighteenth century'.[41] Yet this narrative overlooks the nuanced use and reuse of Mahomet and Mahometanism in an early modern period defined by expansion and change. Tolan's discussion of early modern attitudes, for instance, skips from a brief discussion of the Bibliander's 1543-printed Qur'ān straight to Prideaux's popular but backward-looking refutation of 1697.[42] The diverse reactions and subtle repositioning that take place in this period (particularly by English writers, printers and clergymen) are overlooked. Mahomet's medieval inheritance is, I hope to argue, never as static as such arguments suggest.

An engagement with that complex legacy is no doubt central to early modern conceptions of Muhammad and Islam, and will be explored around the transition of four influential medieval works through the first English printing presses in the opening part of the book. One fourteenth-century work that was a relatively late transfer into print was William Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman*, with the later B-text (c. 1379) first printed by Robert Crowley in 1550.[43] This popular and influential poem demonstrates how a multifaceted medieval legacy might be manifested in English writing before print, and the continuities and differences between this text and Thomas Coryat's early-seventeenth-century *extempore* diatribe are revealing. From amongst Langland's dream visions a discussion develops between Anima and Will about conversion and the relationship between the 'Sarsen' and the Christian. This initially presents (in marked counterpoint to Coryat) what Dorothee Metlitzki has described as 'the most liberal opinion in the medieval outlook on the religion of the Saracens'.[44] 'For Sarsens', Langland writes:

> … han somewhat semynge to oure bileve,
> For thei love and bileve in o [Lede] almyghty,
> And we, lered and lewed, [bileveth in oon God] –
> Cristene and uncristene on oon God bileveth.
> (B.xv.392–5)[45]

Taken alone, these lines seem to suggest a relatively tolerant appraisal of the two paralleled monotheisms: Islam and Christianity. Both Saracens and Christians believe in one God, and the Saracens subscribe to something that approximates Christianity; the potential for assimilation rejected in Coryat's assertion of two distinct 'Religions' seems undeniable. However, the context is crucial. These lines come in the wake of an expression of alarm at some clergy's lazy 'overhuppen [skipping over], as oothere doon, in Offices and in Houres' (B.xv.385). Reassurance comes

in the vigorously anti-clerical assertion that '*sola fides sufficit* to save': that faith alone suffices (B.xv.388). By this reasoning, 'lewed' (unlearned) people, as well as 'Sarsens […] scribes and Jewes' (B.xv.389) might find redemption.

It is the word 'semynge' – that the Sarsens' belief is 'somewhat semynge to oure bileve' – that suggests all is not what it seems, with the implication that the doctrine of Mahomet only resembles the truth. This is affirmed in the next lines: 'Ac oon Makometh, a man, in mysbileve / Broughte Sarsens of Suree [Syria] – and see in what manere' (B.xv.397). The use of 'Ac' – but – at the start of this sentence immediately tempers any earlier expression of toleration by placing it in a pre-Mahometan past. What follows makes Mahomet – a fallible, mortal man – an agent of infidelity in Christian Syria, following the connection between 'Makometh and Mede' repeatedly established earlier in the poem.[46] These first two lines assert a fall from grace. The poem continues:

> This Makometh was Cristene man, and for he moste noght ben a pope,
> Into Surrie he soughte, and thorugh hise sotile wittes
> Daunted a dowve, and day and nyght hire fedde.
> The corn that she croppede, he caste it in his ere;
> And if he among the peple preched, or in places come,
> Thanne wolde the colvere come to the clerkes ere
> Menynge as after mete – thus Makometh hire enchauntede,
> And dide folk thanne falle on knees, for he swoor in his prechyng
> That the colvere that com so com from God of hevene
> As messager to Makometh, men for to teche.
> And thus thorugh wiles of his wit and a whit dowve
> Makometh in mysbileve men and wommen broughte,
> That lered there and lewed yit leeven on hise lawes.
>
> (B.xv.398–410)[47]

This fable, presented here as truth, is repeated endlessly in late medieval and early modern texts and plays a key part in Coryat's speech in Multan. Mahomet was, according to this narrative, a disaffected Christian clerk with grand ambitions – the later C-text is even more explicit:

> Men fyndeth that Makamede was a man ycrystned,
> And a cardinal of court a gret clerk with-alle,
> And porsuede to haue be a pope pryns of holychurche
>
> (C.xviii.165–7)[48]

This deliberately named 'Makamede' comes from within the Christian church and falls from grace as a result of his own pride and immorality, which designates his religion as simply a heretical sect, a crooked offshoot

of the true church and its founder a type of Antichrist. Mahomet and his irredeemably false doctrine are thus made familiar, contained and categorised within a well-established Christian codification of difference for which there was a 'stockpile of readily adaptable polemical ammunition'.[49] Mahomet is furthermore painted as a kind of Christ – the C-text records that 'for Messye [messiah] thei hym heolde' (C.xviii.159) – and the slight biography we are presented would seem to affirm this inversion. He was ambitious for worldly power and when frustrated turned his 'sotile wittes' to cynically fabricating the illusion of divinity to gain that power illegitimately. For the Christian church authentic miracles were a guarantor of true divinity and of the hand of God in human affairs; hence Mahomet's miracles must be elaborately, but transparently, false. That it is a white dove that he trains to eat at his ear is further evidence of Mahomet's sacrilegious cynicism because it parodies the physical manifestation of the holy ghost in Christian theology (see Figure 2 for a manuscript depiction of this popular episode). Thus he 'in mysbileve men and wommen broughte', the word 'mysbileve' once more asserting the status of Mahomet's creed as a non-belief, as an inversion of true belief, a perversion of Christianity that enables him to manipulate and misguide the people of Syria.

Establishing Mahomet and his heresy as 'somewhat semynge' to Christianity further generates a series of rich satirical possibilities that subsequent English writers gleefully exploit, and which become extravagant conceits in the wake of Reformation schism (as discussed in Chapter 2). Mahometanism is once again the 'double' of Christianity, necessitating a thorough self-examination by Langland's Christian readers. Yet this is a reflection that of course originates in Christianity and is once again created by it. Langland's Mahomet is fabricated specifically for satirical purposes, as the lines that complete the short biographical sketch demonstrate:

> And siththe Oure Saveour suffred the Sarsens so bigiled
> Thorugh a Cristen clerk acorsed in his soule –
> Ac for drede of the deeth I dar noght telle truthe,
> How Englisshe clerkes a colvere fede that Coveitise highte,
> And ben manered after Makometh, that no man useth trouthe.
> (B.xv.411–15)[50]

Mahomet becomes a demonstration of the misplaced values of English clerics, in whom there is no 'trouthe' to be found. Michael Paull identifies how throughout the poem Mahomet functions as a symbol of church corruption and of *cupiditas*, with Anima repeatedly asserting how



Figure 2. 'Machomeet' preaching (with doves) (c. 1450). From John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*. © The British Library Board, Harley 1766 f. 223.

Mahomet's practices 'are being continued by the English clegy'.[51] Later in the same passus there are further laments that 'so many men so longe on Makometh sholde bileve' (B.xv.492). Prelates accumulate wealth and titles while the real work of the church remains undone; if these 'Sarsens, scribes and Jewes' were given only a portion of Christianity, 'Thei sholde

turne, whoso travaile wolde and teche hem of the Trinite' (B.xv.502). Satire, true faith and conversion are thus seamlessly united in a formula that would be regularly repeated in later centuries.

Here Langland engages with John Wycliffe's earlier use of Mahomet, whose life and false doctrine the reformer and translator had used in many different contexts to articulate his critique of church disunity and the rise of new mendicant orders. Wycliffe found repeated points of comparison between Mahomet's selective and dangerously innovative use of the Bible and that of the Roman Catholic Church, with particular emphasis placed on a shared rejection of any challenge to their religious authority (an accusation that would resurface repeatedly in the wake of Reformation). Like Langland, Wycliffe presses Mahomet into service as the pre-eminent symbol of *cupiditas*, the key divisive force in human affairs. As Paull notes, 'all the false prelates and worldly friars' become 'extensions of Mahomet, and all prefigure Antichrist'.[52] Thus Wycliffe could argue that just 'as Macometis lawe takiþ myche of Cristis lawe, and meddliþ oþir lawes, and þere comeþ in venym, so doiþ Anticrist in þer new sectis'.[53] He even acknowledged that some Christians' capacity for deceit surpassed 'Macometis'.[54] So despite (or perhaps because of) having once been a cardinal who was denied the papacy, Mahomet is a potent 'infidel' opponent to invoke in attacking the church, a perfect combination of anti-Christian alien with familiar, parasitic heretic.

The use by Wycliffe and Langland of a life of Mahomet propagated by the Christian church to challenge that church and its clergy is an indication of the fertile medieval legacy bequeathed to later English writers. As these examples demonstrate, however, the life was not a static entity, but rather a series of divisible units that encouraged writers to fabricate versions with varying degrees of detail and sophistication. This legacy also offered other possibilities. One connected element is the prose and verse romance model that presents a vision of 'Mahoun' or 'Mahound' as an idol, worshipped by all pagan enemies of Christianity. This curious vision, originally generated in the twelfth century, stems in English from fourteenth-century translations of French celebrations of crusade and posits Mahoun as a kind of idol-God, invoked at moments of tension ('by Mahoun full of mygt!'), worshipped in temples and smashed by crusading heroes.[55] Following a pattern established in the *Chansons de Roland*, popular English verse romances like *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdan of Babylon* and lives of the Saints like the *Life of St Katherine* circulated this idolatrous image widely. It was to gain new currency in the nationalist, anti-idolatrous climate of Protestant England (as detailed

in Chapter 3).[56] Aside from Mahomet's positioning as an absolute enemy, there is a further connection to the model used by Langland in the bizarre parody of the trinity in which he was often placed. This regularly includes the fantastical figure of Termagent, alongside an eclectic collection of idols including Jove, Jupiter, Plato, Apollo and, in *Guy of Warwick*, Judas Iscariot.[57] It is the idolatrous image of Mahomet that informs his curious and often comic position in the great religious dramatic cycles of this period: in the York, Chester and Townley cycles, for instance, pharaohs, pagans, devils, Jews, the soldiers that crucify Christ, Herod and Pontius Pilate are all devotees of 'Mahoun'. As John Tolan has remarked, this opposition 'typologically prefigures the whole spiritual conflict that these plays seek to dramatize: a continual struggle between the followers of Christ and the satanically inspired devotees of Mahownde'.[58]

The longevity of such representations is undeniable – the Corpus Christi plays are not fully suppressed in northern England until the 1570s, and the popular romances are given a new burst of life at the very end of the sixteenth century on both page and stage. The alternative life of Mahomet used by Langland is repeatedly modified and augmented, but remains in circulation into the late seventeenth century and beyond, when Humphrey Prideaux and Henry Stubbe (opposed in almost everything else) could agree 'that we have so many fabulous and ridiculous Accounts, both of *Mahomet* and his *Imposture*, go current amongst us, which serve only to the exposing of us to the laughter of the *Mahometans*, when related amongst them'.[59] An acknowledgement of Mahometan agency here – that *they* laugh at *us* – generates the necessity of a searching introspection amongst Christian readers, and is an important development (it is notably absent from Coryat's rant in Multan). Stubbe would go further, and attempt to reclaim Mahomet as a kind of ur-Christian by 'justly' rejecting 'a great deal of fabulous, ridiculous trash, with which most of the Christian Narratives of him are stuff'd'.[60] Both Stubbe and Prideaux in different ways found that the established Christian narratives of Mahomet did not stand up to the rational scrutiny of their age, but both narrate it as central to English conceptions of religious history, state and theology (a point explored in Chapter 4). Between the fourteenth century of the religious civic cycles and *Piers Plowman* and the deliberate revisionism of Henry Stubbe in the 1670s and George Sale in the 1730s, this rewriting occurs over and over again. Sometimes with only a fractional readjustment, sometimes as an entire rethinking, Mahomet nonetheless remains central to English conceptions of Islam and to defining an English identity, particularly because his status as both secular and supreme religious

leader offered apposite satirical parallels with post-Reformation English monarchs.

The England that emerges from the Enlightenment is thus an England shaped by this process – it would not exist in the same form without these Mahometan engagements. This is indeed a consequence of the rich possibilities contained in the medieval inheritance, but it also results from the effect on England of two polemically entwined events – the urgency injected by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (and subsequent Ottoman territorial advances) and the Reformation. For the English, as for most people within Christendom, the world changed, and Mahomet was pushed right to the fore of the English imagination. This book explores that new prominence, its forms, its character and its implications.

IV. STRUCTURE

This book consists of four roughly chronological chapters, each broken into sections that develop chronologically from the late fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. Picking up where this introductory discussion of *Piers Plowman*, Wycliffe and medieval romance ends, Chapter 1 explores the nature of that fertile medieval heritage as it is selectively transferred onto the printed page in the late fifteenth century. Focussing initially on William Caxton's editions of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* (1482) and *The Golden Legend* (1483), both of which feature well-known lives of 'Machomet', this discussion considers how early Tudor printers, translators, writers and readers approached a subject so 'well rehearsed' in 'books old'. It then moves on to consider Richard Pynson's editions of John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1494) and the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville (1496), which – together with the earlier two Caxton editions – complete a set of the most popular secular texts circulating in Christian Europe in this period. I argue that in its transition through the English printing presses the disparate biographical information in earlier manuscript versions of these texts is rewritten in a newly regular form, and a dominant English Mahomet emerges. The subsequent reproduction and augmentation of this life are then traced, with particular emphasis on the form of the single-volume polemic promoted by the new printing presses. Given the Ottoman advances into Christendom, culminating in the Siege of Vienna in 1529, the life of Mahomet that emerges from these early English printing presses offers a new perspective on the refashioning of medieval authorities in late-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century England.

Chapter 2 begins with an analysis of a remarkable set of images. In the printed Books of Hours circulated throughout northern Christendom from the very end of the fifteenth century appears a depiction of a female personification of the cardinal virtue, Faith, crushing the vice 'Machomet'. This visual opposition is analysed and then traced as it recurs in different forms and in very different contexts across the sixteenth-century Reformation, culminating in a version appearing in the embroideries decorating one of Bess of Hardwick's bedchambers in Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire. This initiates a discussion of what happens to the established narrative of Mahomet during the crisis of religious schism, and how he is used as a polemical device. Which side becomes 'most like to Mahomet'? What is at stake here? Drawing on a wide range of sources, including printed sermons and pamphlets, histories and disputations from all sides of the Reformation dispute, including the first printed edition of the Qur'ān, advocated by Luther and prepared by Theodore Bibliander and Philip Melancthon in 1543, this chapter elucidates the hybrid version of Mahomet that results, and the uses to which it is put, as well as its instability as a defining polemical metaphor.

The extraordinary portrayal of Mahomet as an idolatrous head breathing fire in Robert Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon* (c. 1587) begins Chapter 3, which concerns the dramatisation of Mahomet in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England. Why does a canny professional dramatist like Greene ignore the dominant characterisation of Mahomet as heretic and instead turn to an idolatrous model belonging (as discussed earlier) to the verse and prose romance tradition of a much earlier period? In attempting to answer this question, further questions emerge about staging (and deliberately not staging) Mahomet and Islam, his reappearance as an idol in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* (1610–11) and his repeated invocation on the early modern stage, with particular emphasis on the challenge addressed to him directly in the second part of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. In the process this chapter considers the nature of the revival of romance motifs in late-sixteenth-century England, its connection to the professional stage, and its reinvention there by Marlowe and others. Finally, the stage offers a forum for the emergence of a new kind of Mahomet – or a least a rival to him – the figure of Mortus Ali (or Haly), the prophet of the Persians. His appearance in opposition to Mahomet in William Percy's *Mahomet and His Heaven* (1601) and in Day, Rowley and Wilkins's *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607) is the result of an English preoccupation with Islamic sectarian division, and his fabrication from new information on Persia from

English travel texts and chronicles such as Tommaso Minadoi's *History of the Warres Between the Turkes and the Persians* (1595). As a result, Mahomet is defined and challenged once again.

Chapter 4 is initiated by the dilemma faced by John Bunyan in the deepest of his many spiritual crises in the mid-seventeenth century. How could he be sure that Christ (and Christianity) was true and Mahomet (and Mahometanism) false? Given that each side fervently believed itself to be right, and that the balance of numbers favoured Mahomet, which religion was more likely to be fraudulent? This recurring question offers a useful way to think about developments across the seventeenth century, with an influx of new and detailed information on the prophet and Islam, the development of English Arabism, the tumult of the Civil Wars and the rationalism and relativism associated with the early Enlightenment all having a profound effect on notions of Mahomet.

Starting with a consideration of the Qur'ān in England that includes Samuel Purchas's reproduction of Qur'ānic passages and the controversial publication of the first English edition – *The English Alcoran* of 1649 – these later sections explore the content and context of this translation and surrounding materials. As Alexander Ross acknowledged, Mahomet had now truly arrived in England, and had learnt to speak English. The discussion then moves back to William Bedwell's landmark *Mohammedis imposturae* (1615) to consider the nature of 'imposturae', a word which came to define Mahomet in this period via poets such as John Donne, Andrew Marvell and others. This part concludes with the radical reorientation that takes place in the Unitarian controversies of the latter part of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Signalled in Ross's caveat annexed to the *Alcoran*, these debates over the past, present and future of Anglican theology focus relentlessly on Mahomet, and this discussion pivots around two texts that are often considered to be totally opposed – Henry Stubbe's *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* (c. 1671) and Humphrey Prideaux's *The True Nature of Imposture fully displayed in the life of Mahomet* (1697). A consideration of their differences reveals another English Mahomet emerging out of religious controversy to take an increasingly radical role in texts such as John Toland's *Nazarenus or, Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity* (1718) and Abdulla Mahumed Omar's *Mahomet No Imposter* (1620), whose title speaks for itself.

The Conclusion draws on this complex and multifaceted history, initially by using the creative translation and performance of Voltaire's *Mahomet* in London in 1744. It would provoke a riot in Smock Alley in

Dublin in 1754, but in its British debut the play indicates how Mahomet remained unfixed, particularly when it is paralleled with that great monument of English Arabism, George Sale's *The Koran, commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed* (1734). Both works react to and incorporate the developments of the previous three centuries, and each pulls the Mahomet that emerges in different directions in a demonstration of his continuing currency.

Although Voltaire placed his mid-eighteenth-century Mahomet in the context of what remained an inward-looking Northern European discourse of political and religious orthodoxy, his play was a return to an earlier politics of representation – a caricature. Despite Voltaire's advocacy of his *Koran*, George Sale's reaction against this tendency to caricature the prophet was profoundly important. The detailed and lengthy 'Preliminary Discourse' to his translation and his undoubted skills as a translator are of course tempered by his assertion of Christian veracity and evangelical purpose (he was an eminent member of The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge).[61] However he was keen, as my conclusion demonstrates, to establish what he considered to be a 'true' Muhammad, based on verifiable facts, unclouded by what Stubbe called the 'calumnies of the Christians', to the point that he received criticism from a number of his contemporaries.[62]

Sale's text remained the authoritative translation for many well into the twentieth century, was translated into at least six other European languages and saw more than sixty editions. This alone indicates that the foundation for what became accepted as an authentic Muhammad had been laid, one that was aligned with the supposedly benign Anglicanism of the British Imperium and the ideals of the Enlightenment. This was once more a 'Western' creation, for a 'Western' audience, but a departure from the many forms of blatantly polemical appropriation that had dominated previous centuries. Sale's landmark translation, coupled with shifting geopolitical dynamics and the vastly popular English translation of Antoine Galland's *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* (first edition in 1706), marks the beginning of what has been called the high Orientalist era in which Mahomet is reformed once again.

The book is completed with a brief consideration of the ways in which the imperially authorised life of Mahomet was contested by 'Mahometans' themselves. These challenges – few in number, but each distinct and important – often took place in print, but might also take the form of letters of protest, political influence and public demonstration. At least until the furore surrounding Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988),

they together constitute an unacknowledged history that connects the controversies and tensions surrounding the Prophet Muhammad in the twenty-first century to the figure of Mahomet that emerges from the early modern period. This history serves as a reminder that Mahomet remains latent in 'Western' culture in ways that can only be addressed through careful and repeated scrutiny. It demonstrates that, however unpalatable they may be, the tales that concern this book require retelling.

CHAPTER I

'Well Rehearsed' in 'Books Old': Early Print and the Life of Mahomet

The new technology of print was essential to the institution and propagation of an authoritative narrative of Mahomet in English. Across the Christian world the manuscript culture that preceded the establishment of the printing press had for centuries generated and circulated numerous models through which he might be understood. Material from acknowledged authorities such as the *Risâlat al-Kindi*, the convert Petrus Alfonsi, Abbot Peter of Cluny and the Florentine Dominican Riccoldo da Montecroce (alongside many others) was collected, translated, augmented, anthologised and illustrated in starkly divergent contexts, often creating contradictory and hybrid forms. The resulting *bricolage* – from Lévi-Strauss's notion of mythology and history as a patchwork of old and new – was not wiped away with the coming of print, but instead was repeatedly refined.[1]

The supremacy and authority of the life produced by this self-reflexive patchwork stem, as John Lydgate remarked, from it being 'well reherce[d]' in 'bokes olde'.[2] In the absence of substantially new material concerning Mahomet, the life that Lydgate and his contemporaries favoured gained supremacy simply from the eminence of its sources and the repeated act of reproduction itself – it required no further justification. As surprising as it may seem today, this was not unusual. In the late sixteenth century, Philip Sidney would remark that the historian, 'loaden with old mouse-eaten records', authorises himself 'for the most part upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay'.[3] Although print enabled the repeated reproduction of texts whose sheer volume might generate authority, in the case of Mahomet and other anti-Christian lives, manuscript culture was not simply replaced by print; there continued to be considerable slippage between the two. While

John Lydgate, *Here begynnethe the boke calledde Iohn bochas descriuing the falle of princes princessis [and] other nobles* (London: Printed by Richard Pynson, 1494) sig. E.6r.

recent scholarship has demonstrated that new ideas about books and the control of their production did emerge, the already established notion of the 'medieval author' – with Lydgate a prime example – became 'a mechanism for ordering the new meanings of texts' in an era of print.[4]

Given the ubiquity of the figure variously named Μάμεδ, Mahomet, Maumet, Mackometh, Machometus, Machomis, Makomete, Macomyte and Mahound in Christian manuscripts before print, it was inevitable that the newly standardised 'Machomet' would feature in the first English printed books. The prominence of those medieval 'authors' printed (and in some cases freshly translated) by William Caxton and others in the late fifteenth century helped to shape a dominant life of Mahomet in English. Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, first printed by Caxton in 1482, Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (the *Legenda Aurea*), first printed by Caxton in 1483, John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, first printed by Richard Pynson in 1494, and the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, first printed by Pynson in 1496, represent the most widely read texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and certainly the *Golden Legend* and Mandeville's *Travels* were to prove the most popular – and most often reproduced – secular printed texts in Christian Europe until the mid-sixteenth century.[5] All these works told tales of Mahomet based on various manuscript sources.

The lives of Mahomet that appear in these texts, though seldom identical, create a single, composite and pre-eminent biography that displays key features. Together they constitute a life that printing presses widely disseminated – and authorised – and which became rich source material for subsequent generations of historians, polemicists and playwrights. John Tolan, in his influential work on Islam in the medieval European imagination, has identified two primary models through which Muslims and Islam were understood early in this period – as idolatrous 'pagan Saracens', worshipping Mahomet as one of a number of gods (including Termagent, Apollo and Jupiter); or as violent, debauched heretics, devoted to the cynical heresiarch Mahomet.[6] Although, as later parts of this book demonstrate, elements of Mahometan idolatry do appear in early modern English writing and drama, it is Mahomet's manifestation as arch heretic that is central to the life reproduced and defined by de Voragine, Higden, Lydgate and Mandeville. Although invariably an uneven blend of sources, this archetype returns – without necessarily citing directly – to pivotal works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries generated in the great polemical drive that followed the second and third Crusades, which sought to define an ideal Christian and attack non-Christians with evangelical vigour, often through theological refutation.[7] A renewed

Christological focus amongst Christian authorities meant that Mahomet emerged in stark opposition to Christ, a lack of divinity making his life an inversion of the biblical narrative of Jesus related in the New Testament, a strategy that obscured the connections between Christianity and Islam.[8] Mahomet was instead contained within the confines of the hagiographical life (the *vita*) of the Christian saints, the purpose of which was to encourage the emulation of Christ through purity, abstention, righteous evangelism and sacrifice, even martyrdom. Mahomet came to personify the negation of such ideals.

Alongside repeatedly demonised heretics with whom he was often familiarly connected, such as his 'brother' Arius, Nestorius and Biblical villains such as Herod, the Mahomet that Christian polemicists fabricated from an amalgam of fantasy and often wilfully misinterpreted biographical detail was specifically designed to demonstrate the truth of Christianity and gain theological victory over a faith that reportedly claimed to supercede it.[9] This project became all the more urgent following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and their (short-lived) establishment of a foothold on the Italian peninsula at Otranto in 1481. Fears of an imminent and apocalyptic final conflict between Christianity and Mahometanism circulated widely.[10] The simultaneous appearance of the life of Mahomet in four of the first and most widely read texts transferred to print is no new beginning – it is rather a consolidation in response to the new world order that followed the events of 1453. Honed as a polemical weapon over centuries, a newly simplified and carefully focussed Mahomet was pressed into Christian service against 'the Turk', exploiting the propagandist possibilities of this new medium.

1. FROM *POLYCHRONICON* TO THE *GOLDEN LEGEND* (AND BACK)

In the introduction to his 1482 printed edition of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* – certainly the longest and most ambitious project he had yet undertaken – William Caxton instructs his readership on the purpose and significance of this book. He celebrates Higden's description of the 'vniuersal world […] with the diuisions of countrees, realmes & empyres / the noble cytees / hye mountayns famous ryuers / merueylles & wondres / & also the historical cites & wonderful dedes syth the fyrst makyng of heuen & erth'.[11] This history can furthermore 'affrayeth cruel tyrauntys for drede of Infamye and shame Infynyte' through the presentation of their 'detestable actes […] vnto their perpetual obprobrye and dyuulgation of

theyr Infamye'.[12] Holding a mirror up to vices leads Caxton to ponder the very purpose of histories: he argues that they 'gretely haue prouffyted oure mortal lyf / that shewe vnto the reders and herers by the exsamples of thynges passyd / what thynge is to be desyred / And what is to be eschewed.' So alongside the presentation of a a Christian vision of God's earthly creation, such histories advance the moral understanding of readers and listeners by emphasising the vices and misdeeds of the sinful; making 'vyces detestable', they 'enhaunceth noble men and depresseth wicked men and fooles'.[13]

Caxton's introduction justifies his print version in explicitly moral terms, and his assertion of Higden's righteous purpose gives a clear insight into the rationale behind the biographical relation of 'Machomet' and other 'wicked men'. Ranulf Higden (c. 1310–64) was a Benedictine monk from St Werburgh's Abbey in Chester, and his text survives in three manuscript versions from the mid-fourteenth century. It had been translated into English by John of Trevisa in 1385, and long before Caxton's print version of this translation, Higden's history had proven popular in both monastic and secular circles. It was a compendium of information: as Michael Livingston has recognised, 'Higden's history of the world is almost entirely reliant' on sources commonly available in a medieval monastic library: 'Josephus, Pliny, Solinus, Isidore, Orosius, and Gerald of Wales are a few of his authorities'.[14]

By moving across the three continents to Paradise in his celebrated initial description of the world, Higden unites geography and a vision of the 'universal world' in an ecclesiastical history that drew upon a model established by Eusebius. In this scheme, both the settlement of the earth by Noah and his sons and God's dispersal of mankind in punishment for human folly in constructing the Tower of Babel were important reference points. The Flood became a key element for theorists of humankind's post-diluvian diversity, and the destruction of Babel a recurring motif in later English millenarian visions of the wider world. Such a powerful sense of God's purpose also meant that other devotional practices – Mahometanism, Judaism and pagan idolatry – might be described, but could only be codified in terms of error and divergence from the truth, soon to be corrected once the events of Revelation came to pass. In this Higden was typical of his contemporaries, yet although the *Polychronicon* is often identified as the last of the great 'universal' histories, it was, according to John Taylor, 'quite different from the majority of monastic chronicles which gave simply a record of contemporary events'.[15] The *Polychronicon*, in contrast, was a history rooted in the past and its popularity, as Taylor

has further suggested, was 'bound up with the growing study of the classics and of all things old' in early-fourteenth-century England, a point supported by Antonia Gransden.[16] The figure of Mahomet belonged to the past and to the present for both Higden and Caxton, and helped to ensure the volume's continuing relevance – certainly writers and courtiers continued to read the text and use it as a 'mine of anecdote and *exempla*' well into the sixteenth century.[17]

The life of Mahomet that appears in Higden's *Polychronicon* fits Caxton's vision of the text's didactic moral purpose, and in its synthesis of sources adheres to a formulaic model found in many earlier Latin chronicles.[18] Based upon a standard 'story' of the 'fals prophete', but augmented by material (now lost) by Steven Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (c.1150–1228) and Gerald of Wales's late-twelfth-century *De principis instructione* (*On the instruction of princes*), it begins by placing events of Mahomet's life in historical context.[19] Higden returns his readers to the Byzantine empire under Flavius Heraclius Augustus ('aboute the yere of our lord six honderd and twenty') in which 'crystendom was soo encreced that it conteyned Europa and many prouynces of Asia and wel nygh al affryca' – an apparently golden age of Christian dominance.[20] In a common narrative strategy, it was the 'discorde & stryf of crysten men' that broke this unity, enabling the success of Mahomet's creed amongst the 'Agarenes', also known as 'Ismaylytes' or 'saracenes', a term whose etymology is obscure but was commonly thought to refer to Abraham's wife Sarah.[21] Each of these names recall an Old Testament genealogy traced back to the division between Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael (Mahomet and Mahometans descending from the latter). This expansion is characterised in explicitly physical terms: the purity of Christendom is defiled by Mahomet's 'errour', which 'had infecte al affryca'. It also 'defouled […] a grete dele of spayne' and only 'goddes grace and mercy' prevented this plague-like 'pestylence' infecting 'al ffraunce with spayne'.[22] This catastrophe is then rationalised within a Christian providential world history, given that, as Higden points out, the Mahometan advance had already been prophesied by 'methodius the martir', the falsely attributed author of an influential seventh century Syriac apocalypse.[23]

What follows in Higden's account of this 'fals prophete and witch' is the insertion of a 'comyn tale', the false miracle of the dove, widely circulated in text and illustration and which had already appeared in English in William Langland's fourteenth-century *Vision of Piers Plowman*.[24] Yet once this 'comyn' tale has been concluded, scepticism emerges regarding its veracity. What Higden then relates is 'more alowed and approved', and

begins with the appearance of an exiled Nestorian monk named Sergius – from the twelfth century on, a mainstay of early lives of Mahomet – whom, Higden writes, some sources suggest was 'archdeken of Autiochia [Antioch] or patriarke of Ierusalem', again from within the Christian fold.[25] He brings his heresy to 'Machomet', an orphan involved in the transportation and sale of 'marchandyse', who had hitherto worshipped idols. This kind of belief system is referred to as 'maumetry', a bizarre but characteristic anachronism given that 'maumet' or 'mammet' (derived ultimately from the same Arabic root that generated Mahomet) had long signified an idol in Christian writing. Despite Higden's assertion of Mahometan monotheism, any straightforward distinction between Mahomet's 'lawe' and idolatry is thus inevitably blurred by the terminology available.

Higden explains how Mahomet became a prophet. Along with all of 'his countrey men of Arabia' he was an idolater particularly devoted to Venus, hence 'the saraseyns holden the fryday holy as the Iewes don the saterday and we the sonday'.[26] Life as a travelling merchant meant that Mahomet was 'ofte in the company of Iewes and of crysten men' and learnt their 'maners, vsages and custommes'. Another commonplace accusation follows: that he combined various tenets of both faiths, together with 'wytchecraft and nygromancy', plus knowledge of astrology and his own skills in oratory to create his fabricated and monstrous 'errour'. Consequently, the Saracens are ritually circumcised and denied 'swynyssh flessh' as the Jews are, and they submit to the ritual washing 'of lymmes in water' to accord with Christian baptism. Higden goes on: with some 'spyces' gained through witchcraft and 'fayre wordes', Mahomet wooed a lady named 'Cadygan' from the province of 'Corozonia' before marrying this 'wedewe that was quene' and thus 'he was made lord of that prouynce'. From there his empire grew in the 'est' and he 'toke to the maner of spekynge of trewe prophetes', recognising that a manufactured illusion of holiness – his 'fals lawe' – could win him the power he craved sooner than by 'dedes of Armes'.[27] Cynical self-interest is thus Mahomet's dominant characteristic, and his 'lawe' is carefully shown to be an elaborate construct – an heretical intervention. Higden draws elements from a number of sources to fashion Mahomet as a lawgiver in a treatment that is typical of later accounts.

This law is carefully scrutinised, and Higden employs confutational strategies that were still in use in the early eighteenth century. Mahomet justifies his prohibition of pork by explaining that 'swyne come of camels dirt after noes [Noah's] flood and therfore clene men shold eschewe it'; in order to appeal cynically to the greatest constituency, he 'ordeyned

that a man shold haue as many wyues and concubynes as he myght sustene with his catel'. This sexual licence is tempered by an acknowledgement that he demanded his followers 'to vse sobreness of mete and drynk' and forbade them 'drynkyn of wyn', and that, as a monotheist, he worshipped 'one myghty god creatour', recognising that Moses and John were prophets and that the immaculately conceived Christ 'was gretter and grettest of all prophetes'. Mahomet confirms this 'in his booke that hete Alkaron', yet he also introduces into Christian scripture some erroneous assertions – that Judas was crucified instead of Christ and that each year believers are required to go to 'goddes hows' in 'matha' (Mecca?), built by Abraham for 'his childeren ismaelytes'.[28] Following a list of punishments for fornication, Higden paradoxically turns to another site of Christian scrutiny – Mahomet's paradise. It is imagined as a place where all appetites are satisfied, an 'orcharde of plesyre & lykynge' with 'no distempure', no 'payne' but instead 'al maner of welthe and of lykynge': 'mete for to ete and clothes to were and maydens tembrace fayre'. Bodily satisfaction is the theme here, clearly opposed to the spiritual rewards of Christian heaven, and closely related – as Dorothee Metlitzki has argued – to contemporary visions of an indolent 'Land of Cockaigne'.[29] In contrast to his followers luxuriating in paradise, Mahomet promises those opposed to his law only 'fyre & payne of helle withoute ende'.[30]

Higden reminds his readers of Mahomet's debt to Christian doctrine throughout his relation of the life and in doing so justifies its prominence in his history. One element is the explicit comparison of Mahometan devotion with Jewish reverence for Moses and that of 'crysten men' for Christ. As in the suggestion that Christian discord encouraged the rise of this new sect (a connection later made with every Ottoman military success) there is an element of chastisement here. The 'Sarasyns' consider themselves better than Jews and Christians since they 'holde holy theyr lawe' while 'Iewes & Crysten men ofte trespacen ayenst theyr owne lawe'.[31] This formula, in which the improbability of an infidel living more virtuously than his Christian counterparts is used to shame a Christian audience into reforming themselves, was already a commonplace, and would regularly be used by later Christian writers (including Mandeville and Erasmus).[32] Mahomet and the Mahometans, like Moses and the Jews with whom they are paralleled, are rationalised as corrupt versions of Christ and Christians, rhetorically employed to chastise.

What immediately follows corresponds to the earlier 'fals' miracle of the dove, and initially appears to be an interpolation, jarring incongruously with the preceding lines. Less commonly reproduced than the

previous legend – perhaps because it does not correspond so neatly with Christian religious iconography – it again features the training of animals in order to create the illusion of divinity to the multitude. Here, however, it is the divinity of the prophet that is manufactured, alongside the divinity of 'that cursed book Alcaron'. Mahomet trains a wild camel (often this legend features a bull) to respond only to 'mete' from 'his owne honde', and hangs the 'Alcaron' about its neck. This 'wonder' would 'lepe' and 'sterte' at the sight of others, but when Mahomet came to it, the camel ran to him, bowed before him, and 'lykked his hondes as he was taught', and the Prophet received the book. Thus 'the peple cryed and sayde in this dede is shewed the holynes of goddess [God's] prophete' and consequently this day, in a misconception of Ramadan, is the prompt for Muslims to 'faste a moneth' during which time 'they ete not ne drynke/ ne delen with theyr wyues'.[33] Mahomet's manipulation of dumb uncomprehending beasts becomes a metaphor for all mistaken Mahometan belief, his laws maintained without question.

Two key characteristic traits remain for Higden to relate. The first is another conspicuously false miracle, in this case born of necessity rather than by design. Mahomet had often displeased his wife 'for he hadde the fallynge euyll' – epilepsy – but he cynically reassured her by arguing that this was divine revelation: 'that he fyll to grou[n]d for the wordes of seint mychel tharchangel that spak with hym'. Higden goes no further – he does not need to, because, as Norman Daniel has written, this particular legend had an 'extraordinary vitality among both Latin and oriental Christians' and is reproduced in different forms in countless texts, both before and after the advent of print, and is particularly pronounced in Mandeville's *Travels*.[34] The Wellcome library even contains a nineteenth-century copy of a recipe to prevent epilepsy, ascribed to Muhammad himself.[35] In a final flourish that indulges a Christian obsession with the death of this 'flesshliman' – and the need for an exemplary demise – Higden turns to the absurd relation reproduced by Gerald of Wales in *De principis instructione* (and earlier endorsed by the chronicler of the first Crusade, Guibert of Nogent, and others).[36] Sacrilegiously indulging himself, 'he was dronke and fylle doune in the streete' – there 'swyn ete him' (as depicted in Figure 3). Added piquancy comes with the assertion that he had reputed them to be 'vnclene beestes' and consequently 'they that holde his lawes spare wyn and swynes flessh'.[37]

Finally, in a curious turn to idolatry that is not found in his major sources, nor in Voragine, Lydgate or Mandeville, Higden describes a great statue of 'machometes ymage' in Spain:



Figure 3. 'Machomeete' killed by swine, from Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*.
© The British Library Board, Harley 1766 f. 224.

And tharchebisshop turpinus tellith that machometes ymage of latone that he made with his owne hondes stondeth in the See stronde and hath his face toward the south. // In that ymage machometus by wytchecraft closed a legyon of fendes. A cryste[n]man that cometh there is lyghtly perysshed. But a sarasyn goth

alwey hoole and sound /[…] The ymage holdeth a mace in his right honde And that mace shal fyrst fallen whan a kynge shal be born in gallia that shal renewe al spayne with crysten lawes. And whan the mace shal falle / thene the sarasyns shall flee and leue theyr tresorye.[38]

Images and narratives of Mahometan idolatry were not uncommon, nor were they necessarily distinct from conceptions of monotheism. As John Tolan points out, William of Malmesbury, writing around 1125, 'knows that the Saracens are monotheists yet still believes they erected a statue of Muhammad in the temple of Jerusalem'.[39] Another of Caxton's texts, later reissued in 1595 as *The moste pleasaunt historye of Blanchardine*, had described 'Mahomet' as a 'detestable and cursed Idoll'.[40] Higden's Archibishop 'turpinus' was the author of a popular medieval text, the twelfth-century *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, which asserts that 'Mauhoumet made an idol of himself in Spain, used his necromancy to fill it with demons, and set it up to protect the Saracens from Christian attack'.[41]

The Iberian location is particularly important. Writing before the final Christian 'Reconquista' of Spain in 1492, Higden erroneously imagines Mahomet fashioning an idol of himself, holding a mace that will only fall once a king is born who shall 'renewe al spayne with crysten lawes'.[42] For the readership of Caxton's edition this was actually coming to pass in the celebrated and brutal campaigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and by De Worde's 1495 edition of the *Polychronicon* their victory had culminated in the forced baptism of thousands of Muslims, visually depicted alongside motifs of crusade in the triumphal altarpiece of the Capilla Real in Granada.[43] The notion that Mahomet had prophesied the demise of his 'lawe' at the hands of Christians is especially important because it implies his inevitable submission before the universal truth of the Christian Church. This too would have an afterlife in English text and image, appearing in different forms in chronicles, news pamphlets and celestial visions, in which Mahometan defeat and conversion are envisioned as necessary elements to the sequence of events related in Revelation.[44]

One specific copy of the *Polychronicon* can offer a sense of how Higden's life of Mahomet might be read and re-read. The Travers Collection in the University of Sussex library contains a copy of Caxton's first edition, passed down for at least part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through several generations of the Middleton family, as their notes of ownership attest.[45] Amongst them is the hand of Marmaduke Middleton (d. 1593), controversial Bishop of St David's, and probably his son Richard; their annotations run intermittently throughout the volume. Chapter fourteen of book five, featuring Mahomet, is marked more than most. One hand

has noted the otherwise unacknowledged beginning of the prophet's life in the text that follows the brief relation of Heraclius discussed earlier: in the left margin is expansively written 'Macomete the fals profette'.[46] This suggests something of consequence, given that most points of interest are merely inscribed 'nota bene'. Mirroring precisely Higden's phrasing in the text, the aim here is to mark this moment in the account as particularly noteworthy for later reference or readers.

An earlier hand has used a marginal symbol to indicate noteworthy elements within the life, as well as indicating its beginning and the date of the prophet's birth ('0620'). Corresponding with those moments regularly marked in other popular accounts, particularly in Mandeville's *Travels*, this reader picks out Higden's sources – Gerald of Wales and Steven of Canterbury; the point where he moves to a narrative that is 'more alowed and approved'; the assertion that Machomete's 'lawe' was an erroneous amalgam of Judaism and Christianity; and his cynical wooing of, and marriage to, the widow Cadygan to gain earthly power. The same elements, plus a comment on the composition of the Alcoran, are also neatly annotated in the copy at the Newberry Library, Chicago.[47] What emerges, alongside a keen interest in the authority of Higden's account, is a relentless focus upon the life – this reader does not deem subsequent details of the Alcoran or of religious belief worth marking – and on Mahomet as 'fals', as a fabricator and a manipulator. Once again the life of Mahomet structures this reader's response to Mahometanism. It is a response this and later texts printed by Caxton and his contemporaries encourage, and as these annotations (and other similar examples) demonstrate, it was a response that the *Polychronicon* continued to generate long after its initial appearance in print.

Caxton's rationale for the publication of the *Polychronicon* extols the didactic value of such histories, and gestures towards his next major project featuring influential tales of Mahomet. Since 'historye' is both 'precious & also prouffytable', he has resolved 'to wryte twoo bookes notable […] one of them / whiche is named legenda aurea / that is the golden legende / And that other book is named polycronicon […]'[48] His edition of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* was Caxton's largest and most popular book, one of numerous vernacular printed editions: from 1470 to 1530, this 'ubiquitous work of popular devotion' was the most often printed book in Europe.[49] Caxton clearly imagined the *Polychronicon* and the *Golden Legend* working with a single moral purpose – to show virtue triumphant and make 'vyces detestable' – and their popularity suggests the role early English printed books were expected to play, reinforcing

and augmenting the orthodox religious experience. From its composition around 1265, Voragine's text had been remarkably influential. It remains extant in more than one thousand manuscripts and, intended to be a universal Christian history which might function as 'a mine of information for preachers, collectors of exempla, and artists', it was disseminated right across the Christian world. The life of 'Machomet' (a spelling Caxton adopts in both works) found in the *Golden Legend* consequently appears in numerous later texts and, as Stefano Mula has observed, was even recycled by Voragine himself in both his sermons and his *Chronicle of Genua*.[50]

The life appears in chapter 177 of the *Golden Legend*, part of a larger historical subsection of the whole work that is known as the *Historia Lombardica* (itself occasionally titled *Machometus* in later reproductions).[51] Like the corresponding episode in Higden's *Polychronicon*, Voragine's intention in incorporating Mahomet is to represent him as a personification of vice, an inversion of the virtuous lives of the Saints: as an anti-*vita*. This serves to heighten saintly divinity, placing Mahomet in a long line of damned opponents, from Judas to Julian the Apostate and Simon Magus.[52] Most strikingly, Voragine and Higden's accounts are in many ways nearly identical. The account in the *Golden Legend* begins: 'And whan Focas was dede / Heracle reigned / and aboute the yere of our lord vj hondred and ten / machomete the false prophete and an enchauntour deceyued the agarenes or ysmaelytes / that is to saye the sarazyns in thys maneee […]' Having situated the narrative both historically and geographically, Higden picks up the same tale: 'While heraclius regnede aboute the yere of our lord six honderd and twenty. machamete the fals prophete and witch begyled the ysmalytes and agarenes in this maner.'[53]

Aside from differing by a decade, the two books reproduce the same account. Although Voragine indicates his narrative of Mahomet and the fabricated miracle of the dove is reproduced 'as it is redde / in a hystorye of hym in a certeyn cronycle', for Higden the tale is so well known to his readers that he need not indicate any such provenance. Both conclude this episode with the same flourish: Higden writes 'This that is sayd is the comyn tale. but what foloweth is more alowed and approued' while Voragine ends: 'Thus it is sayd comynly / but thys that shal here folowe is had from more trewer hystorye.' This, according to Mula, is not in any of Voragine's sources and was a caveat that he added in a later revision of the *Golden Legend*.[54] That it is subsequently found in Higden, coupled with the close correspondence of the two accounts, suggests that the

Golden Legend is the 'story' that Higden used for one thread of his life of Mahomet.

Whilst the relatively small number of critical works on the *Polychronicon* do not note a direct debt to Voragine in Higden's text, the interconnections do not end with the clerk of Rome/dove episode. Other elements in common – although not always in the same order – include the early biographical details of Mahomet's life as a 'marchaunte'; the reasons for his prohibition of 'swynes flesshe'; the marriage to Cadygam and Mahomet's cynical disguising of his epilepsy; the heretical monk Sergius; the justification of concubines; Mahometan veneration of Venus; the ritual fasting of Ramadan; worshipping toward the south; the punishment meted out to thieves; Mahomet's night journey; and the nature of Mahometan paradise. The key elements of Voragine's life are all present in Higden – to them is added the second fabricated miracle of the camel and the 'Alcaron', and a series of reflections upon the theological connections between Mahomet's new law and Christianity. It remains possible, however, that both Voragine and Higden used the same source independently: Hugh of Fleury's early twelfth-century *Historia ecclesiastica*, probably – although it is disputed – as it was reproduced in the popular and influential *Speculum historiale* (c. 1250) compiled by Vincent of Beauvais.[55]

It is further testament to the complex process of circulation, interpolation and reproduction that the life of Mahomet offered by Hugh of Fleury was itself derived from Anastasius's translation of Theophanes's *Chronographica*, and that Fleury's text had been a source for one of Higden's acknowledged authorities, Gerald of Wales.[56] Whether the *Speculum historiale* was the 'certeyn cronycle' consulted by Voragine as his central source is less important than the insight it gives into the way in which transmission of a life of Mahomet refines and authorises that life. Beauvais conflated a number of pivotal sources, including the influential polemical disputation of the *Risâlat al-Kindi*. Yet Beauvais' omission of 'all the passages of argument, which the quotation of factual matter was intended in the original to illustrate' creates a different life entirely, one in which 'the historical facts were divorced from their contexts'.[57] A muddled and 'conflicting' portrait of Mahomet is produced, in which 'facts useful for polemic' mingle with fantasy, the contours of which are then reproduced in Voragine and in Higden and subsequently treated as a single unquestioned and coherent life by later English writers.[58]

Just as Higden had looked to Stephen Langton and Gerald of Wales to make his central source more nuanced and sophisticated, in the *Golden Legend* Voragine attempted to balance the sensational revelations of

his own primary source with details from the fifth chapter of Alfonsi's *Dialogi*. This was 'one of the most widely read Latin theological texts on Islam', its authenticity based upon Alfonsi's own knowledge of Arabic – it was also another source for Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*.[59] As with the stripping of the disputation element of the *Risâlat al-Kindi*, the use of Alfonsi's text – if indeed Voragine consulted it directly – has similarly involved the 'elimination of the fiction of the dialogue'. The final result is a text that 'looks more like a simple description than an attack on Islam or a defence of Christianity.'[60] For the establishment of a single authoritative life of Mahomet, this movement from biographical and doctrinal elements presented from one side of a disputational dialogue, to their incorporation as unquestioned fact, is an important development. This is not to suggest that the dialogue or disputation disappeared; as Nabil Matar has recently demonstrated, it remained a forum for Christian attempts to demolish Mahometan theology (often in fictionalised forms) well into the early modern period.[61] Yet the key elements of the polemical life of Mahomet were no longer in question, as the concordance between these early printed accounts indicate. Instead they became indisputable, a complex mass of assertions reduced to the iconic simplicity of caricature.

The supplementary sources used by both Higden and Voragine may seem unimportant, but are relevant to any consideration of their marked divergence in the manner of Mahomet's death. Higden asserts that Mahomet had fallen down drunk in the street and had been 'gnaven by swine' (as in Figure 3). Earlier versions of this gratuitous account had been circulated, as Norman Daniel has recognised, by Alan of Lille, who asserted that the Prophet had been eaten by dogs, and by both Guibert de Nogent and Matthew Paris. But it was Gerald of Wales who added drunkenness, and in this account it must have appealed to Higden as either more spectacularly apposite or more widely accepted.[62] Voragine presents a very diffferent death, in which there was first a 'lambe of flesshe offryd to hym / whyche spake vnto hym and sayd / be ware that thou ete me not / For there is venym wythin me' but later 'after certeyn yerys there was a venym gyuen by whyche he deyed'.[63] This story originates in the Islamic tradition, loosely based on an episode narrated by ibn Ishaq, and could have been found in any number of earlier sources. In response to the speaking shoulder of lamb, certain questions invariably arose. Again, Daniel writes:

> Why, asked Vitry, paraphrasing an argument that appeared in the *Risâlah*, did Muhammad not recognise the poison that eighteen years later he died of; why, asked the original from which Paris and Viterbo derived, did he not save his

companion who died? Acqui also described the miraculous warning uttered by the cooked lamb, and contrasted Muhammad's subsequent death by poison, unsaved by miracles. Some of the confusion here was due to the confusion of unorthodox Islamic sources. There were other less specific statements that Muhammad died by poison.[64]

Earlier chroniclers had to negotiate this bewildering profusion of narratives to form their own authentic and exemplary life, and Higden and Voragine – so similar elsewhere – clearly had different expectations of the death with which they conclude. This seems to be a result of a broader polemical shift in the dominant narrative that these accounts both reflected and informed – in Higden's chronologically later account greater emphasis is placed upon the falsity and fakery of Mahomet's 'lawe', and this gruesome death – corresponding closely with a tradition of grimly apposite heretical deaths – offers what Higden, and Gerald of Wales before him, saw as a fitting conclusion to a life of monstrous heresy.[65] English lives would continue this trend, honing Mahomet into an exemplar of anti-Christian malevolence and providential justice.

II. *THE FALL OF PRINCES*

John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, first printed by Pynson in 1494 and with later editions in 1527 and 1554, was written between 1431 and 1439.[66] Like Higden and Voragine's texts, it was popular throughout the fifteenth century, particularly as a source for *exempla*. Originally dedicated by Lydgate, a monk of St Albans, to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, it was an adaptation of Laurence de Premierfait's *Das Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes*, Premierfait's second expanded French translation in prose of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, written in Latin between 1355 and 1360.[67] Lydgate's English 'rhymed paraphrase' maintains the thrust of the original, which Boccaccio wrote in the form of a dream vision 'with the object of teaching princes the virtue of wisdom and moderation by holding up to them the example of misfortunes provoked by egotism, pride and inordinate ambition'.[68] The parallels with the didactic purpose of both the *Golden Legend* and the *Polychronicon* are clear: Caxton had written that such texts would make 'vyces detestable' and 'enhaunceth noble men'. Again Mahomet is positioned as a negative exemplum, the antithesis of a virtuous man – but here in short memorable verse, and accompanied in some manuscript copies by images (see Figures 2 and 3).

For Boccaccio, and hence for Premierfait and Lydgate, the primary source material could have again been Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum*

historiale, given that the now familiar 'Corozan' life is narrated. Beginning, as in Higden and Voragine's accounts, by placing Mahomet historically in the time of 'phocas' (Flavius Phocas Augustus, Byzantine Emperor from 602 to 610) and 'Eraclyus' (Heraclius), Lydgate agrees with Higden that he was a 'fals prophete and a magician' who was born in Arabia and worshipped 'Idols in dede'. Thence – as in Higden and Voragine – he is swept up in a life of 'merchaundyses', although already 'fals and double subtyll in his dyuyses', and in the process learns the Old and New Testaments from renegade Jews and Christians. As in the other early English printed accounts, in the 'cuntre called Corezan' he meets and bewitches a woman named 'cardycan' (whom he later convinces that his bouts of falling sickness are in fact angelic visitations). He leads the people into 'greate erroure / By his techynge and his fals doctryne' and declares 'opynly that [he] was messie [messiah]', proving as much through false miracles – the first of which is the familiar tale of the dove (Figure 2), the second a variant on Higden's camel training, in which a great bull appears carrying 'Smale pottes with milke and hony borne' on 'eche horne' (in many versions the bull carries the Qur'ān). The text relates that 'Newe lawes also he dyd ordeyne / Shewyd signes by fals apparence / like moyses him silf he dyd feyne / A prophete of moost excellence.'[69] This comparison is not found in either Higden or Voragine, but is taken (along with the milk and honey references) from Vincent of Beauvais.[70]

In all of these key elements Lydgate closely follows his primary source, Laurence de Premierfait, and the similarities to other early printed accounts indicate there were widely accepted core details in late medieval Mahomet lore. Yet there are some important divergences between Lydgate and his source, suggesting an intent to fillet out material considered obsolete and incorporate what he found to be more fitting and widely accepted. As Henry Bergen noted in his 1923 edition of the *Fall of Princes*, Lydgate differs from Premierfait in his life of Mahomet in a number of respects, of which three are particularly revealing. Firstly, Premierfait does not bind Mahomet into the lineage of 'Hysmaell', whereas Lydgate makes this prominent, as it is in Higden's account (the 'pestylence of the ismalytes'). This connection was useful for early modern Christians because in explicitly Pauline terms it allied Mahometanism and Ishmael clearly with 'the flesh' in opposition to 'the spirit' and 'the children of promise' (Galatians 4:22–30). Secondly, Premierfait makes no mention of the 'Image' of Venus Mahomet set up, nor of the consequent veneration of Friday, just as 'the Iewes halowed the Saturday', both of which are foregrounded by Lydgate. This had been a component of both Higden and

Voragine's texts, maintaining an incongruous (and thus polemically useful) element of sensuous idolatry to Mahomet's doctrine. Most important is the way in which Lydgate describes Mahomet's death: 'Lyke a gloton dyed on dronkenes / By exces of drynkynge moch wyne / Fyll in a podell deuoured amonge swine' (depicted in a manuscript of Lydgate's work in Figure 3).[71] This is markedly different from Laurence de Premierfait's rendition of Boccaccio, in which death comes about only after Mahomet has fallen into a sickness 'par venin' (by poison) and lost his senses for seven days.[72] Premierfait also goes on to mention Mahomet's legendary coffin, mysteriously floating in Mecca, a myth increasingly discredited by the mid-fourteenth century (yet tenaciously affirmed in English texts as late as the early seventeenth century) and ignored by Lydgate, as well as Higden, Voragine and Mandeville.[73]

These amendments to Lydgate's primary source demonstrate an increasing uniformity in the life of Mahomet across the early printed narratives, with the prominence of the 'Corozan' narrative, and emphasis placed upon heresy, hypocrisy, a lack of divinity and an exemplary death 'gnaven by swine'. However, it would be a mistake to suggest that this process simply originated with the arrival of the printing press in England. Lydgate's deliberate and focused revisions, alongside Higden's own development of the hitherto dominant life of Mahomet, indicate that the fifteenth century marked the beginning of the 'Corozan' tale's dominance in English. The deliberate manipulation of earlier biographical traditions to produce a simplified, uniform life of Mahomet for polemical dissemination in print just as Constantinople fell to the Ottomans can be no coincidence.

Lydgate seems to have turned to the *Polychronicon*, perhaps in the relatively recent English translation by John of Trevisa (in 1385), to augment Premierfait's French original. Certainly the key elements he introduced – Mahomet's 'Hismaelitis' lineage, his veneration of Venus, Mahometan observance of Friday as a holy day (and the attendant comparison with the Jews), and his graphic death – are all elements emphasised in Higden's text. Lydgate also repeats Higden's assertion that Mahomet was a 'fals prophete' and a 'nygromancian'. This word appears with some frequency in these early lives and derives from the Anglo-Norman/Middle French *nigromance*, and before that to the Latin *nigromantia*, which referred to communication with the dead, sorcery and black magic. It retains those associations here, but unlike the earliest accounts in which his mysterious and devilish power is emphasised, in these printed English accounts it is used with particular reference to Mahomet's 'crafte' and the sinister power of his 'Alkeron'. Over time he has become less a magician and more

an arch manipulator, slavishly and irrationally followed by the Ottoman 'Turks' that the papacy had made initial efforts to convert.[74]

The concordance between Lydgate, Higden and Voragine in their portrayal of Mahomet is furthered in the move from the scriptorum to the print shop in the final decades of the fifteenth century. The prominence of this form of the life reaches beyond these three texts, however. The details they provide would be cherrypicked, copied, reproduced and repeatedly circulated in the following century. This life may have consequently become authoritative, but despite the extraordinary popularity of all three texts, none could match the lasting popularity of the final early printed version I wish to discuss. It is often considered surprisingly unorthodox, and it belongs to the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville.

III. SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE AND THE *TRAVELS*

The Travels of Sir John Mandeville was, as a recent editor of the text has written, 'wildly popular', one of 'the most read of medieval books'.[75] It survives in four distinct forms, and was consulted and copied by writers from all over Christendom in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It was also one of the great success stories of early English print, appearing first in a Pynson edition of 1496 and then in De Worde editions in 1499, 1500, 1503 and 1510. Unlike the three texts already discussed in this chapter, whose influence waned through the English Reformation, Mandeville's popularity and perceived relevance only increased. There were further editions by Thomas East in 1568 and 1582, and the *Travels* were included in different forms in both Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (1589) and Samuel Purchas's *Purchas His Pilgrime*s (1625). There were no fewer than nine seventeenth-century editions, and this remarkable and 'strange' publication history continued into the following centuries.[76] Of those Christian lives of Mahomet transferred to print in England in the late fifteenth century, it was Mandeville's that would be most widely read.

Mandeville's life is also the shortest and most unusual. It concludes a longer series of reflections upon Mahometanism that are often divided up into distinct chapters. In his 1568 edition, Thomas East, following Wynkyn De Worde, names these 'Of the faith of the Saracens, and of the book of their law named Alkaron'; 'Yet it treateth more of Machomet'; and finally the life is narrated in 'Of the byrth of Machomet'. The sections that precede this life include detailed descriptions of 'Saracen' religious doctrine, with particular emphasis on a veneration for central Christian tenets, alongside references to Mahomet and his 'Alkoran' (all of which

Higden, Voragine and Lydgate similarly incorporated into their 'lives'). Mandeville offers to tell his readers 'a parte of theyr lawe, and of theyr belefe' – a departure from earlier accounts that had focused solely on the life and the 'lawe' contained therein.

Mandeville begins with a reassuringly familiar conception of divine judgement, pointing out that in the 'Alkoran' Mahomet wrote 'that they there are good shall goe to Paradise, and the euill folkes to hell'. Yet, as in Higden and Voragine, any possible convergence founders in the excessively carnal nature of Mahomet's paradise, which he presents in detail:

> [It] is a place of delytes, where a man shall finde all maner of fruites at all times, and waters, and riuers running with milke & hony, wine and freshe water, and they shall haue faire houses & good as they haue deserued, and those houses are made of precious stones, gold and syluer, & euery man shall haue ten wiues and all maydens, & he shall euery day once haue to doe with them, and shall euer more be maidens.[77]

Perhaps surprisingly, Mandeville does not condemn. Instead he plays down the divergence he has established between this fleshly 'belefe' and a spiritual Christianity by emphasising Mahometan veneration of the Gospels. The 'Saracens' speak 'often, & beleue of the virgin Mary, and tell of the incarnation' and the 'Alkaron' acknowledges Jesus Christ as 'the best Prophete of all other, and nexte to God'.[78] More supporting detail is given: with Higden and Voragine Mandeville reports that the 'Saracens […] faste amoneth in the yere, & they eate but on the night, and they kepe them from theyr wyues' and that 'Machomet hadde in his boke Alkaron, that euery man shoulde haue two wiues or three or foure'. Again the bodily – and specifically sexual – dimension of Mahometan life is dominant, in tension with the spiritual concerns of Christianity. Yet such concerns are not entirely lost: Mandeville concludes by pointing out that although 'Saracens' believe that 'Machomet was right messenger of God', they do 'haue many good articles of our faith, and some vnderstand the scriptures, profites, gospels, and the Bible'.[79]

A majority of critics have found in Mandeville a surprising level of tolerance. Typical of this view is C. W. R. D. Moseley, who identifies its remarkable 'openness', commenting that Mandeville's 'summary of Muslim attitudes to Jesus and Muhammad is fair, sensible and detailed'.[80] Michael Paull argues that the primary purpose of this episode was entertainment, yet that 'on the whole' the account of Islam is 'fairly objective'.[81] But the temperance of Mandeville's opening remarks needs to be placed in context. Thus far he has only acknowledged Mahometanism in terms of its affirmation of Christian truth: what follows is a description of

his private meeting with a 'Soldan' in which Christian behaviour is lambasted. The Soldan points out:

> [Christian] preestes made no force of goddes seruyce / for they sholde hyue good ensample to men to do well & they gyue ylle ensample & therfore whan the people sholde go on the holy dayes vnto the churche to serue God / they go to tauerne to be in glotony all the daye & the nyght / ete & drynke as beestes yt wote not whan they haue ynough [… Christian men …] sholde be symple meke & sothfast and do almes as Ihesu cryste dyde in whom they beleue / & he sayd they are to couetous yt for a lytell syluer they selle theyr children theyr systers & theyr wyues / and one taketh an other mannes wyf & none holdeth his fayth to other / & therfore sayd he for theyr synnes hath god gyuen thyse londes to our hondes / & not thorugh our strength but all for your sinnnes. For we wote well forsoth whan ye serue well your god that he wyll helpe you so yt no man shall wynne agaynst the londe whan they serue theyr god well […][82]

This improbable diatribe, in which the Sultan of Egypt criticises Christianity for an inability to live up to its own moral standards, is a common device.[83] Christians – including the narrator himself – are meant to be shamed into reforming their behaviour by the prospect of ostensibly 'alien' figures acting with greater moral probity.

The initial emphasis on priestly abuses in this section fits with what many critics have seen as Lollard sympathies in this work, and from the 1390s Lollard opposition to crusade in favour of missionary zeal, preaching and conversion (following Wycliffe) could enable a more sympathetic attitude towards Mahometans. This would seem to contradict the enthusiastic call for crusade with which the *Travels* opens, but, as Rosemary Tzanaki notes, Mandeville's encounter with the Sultan is 'less a true expression of a heartfelt aspiration on the author's part, than a thiny veiled criticism of the state of Western Christendom'.[84] In this respect, the lack of any identified source for the episode reveals something of the intention and purpose behind the wider 'relatively favourable' portrayal of Mahomet's 'lawe': to encourage Christians, in every apect of their lives, to reflect upon the Christian nature of their conduct.

For the rest of Mandeville's reflections on Mahomet, the standard critical orthodoxy – certainly since Malcolm Letts' work in the 1950s – identifies one central source, from which it was lifted almost word for word: William of Tripoli's *De statu Saracenorum* (1273).[85] In addition one or two minor secondary supplemental sources are identified, most likely the sections on Mahomet in Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* – a probable source for each of the other early printed accounts – but also Philippe de Valois and others.[86] Recent scholarly work on *De statu Saracenorum*

by Peter Engels and later by John Tolan complicates this picture, with important implications for Mandeville's *Travels*.[87] Although once confidently attributed to William of Tripoli, this text 'now appears to be an anonymous compilation that used William's *Notitia de Machometo* (1271) as its principal source'.[88]

The resulting *De statu Saracenorum* is profoundly influenced, as Tolan has written, by the Ilkhanate Mongol sack of Baghdad (1258), presenting more theological detail than the original *Notitia* and arguing that 'Islam is so close to Christianity that the conversion of Muslims by peaceful means should be an easy task'.[89] This is clearly mirrored in Mandeville's assertion that 'the Saracens beleue so nere our faith, that they are lightly conuerted, whan men preach the law of Iesu Christ'.[90] Just as the *Travels* indicates that the Saracens themselves believe 'theyr lawe of Machomet shall fayle', the *Statu* 'makes a series of predictions of Islam's imminent demise, claiming that Muhammad himself had predicted the end of Islam when the caliphate was destroyed'.[91] The fall of the Abbasids with the destruction of Baghdad suggested this might be coming to pass, and Christians were eager to evangelically exploit the occasion.[92] An insistent focus in these sections of the *Travels* upon scriptural and ritual concordance between Mahometanism and Christianity (the former affirming the truth of the latter) thus comes from his thirteenth-century source, as, by extension, does Mandeville's celebrated tolerance.

If this section of the *Travels* can be characterised as 'sympathetic', then this sympathy is not sustained in the relation of Mahomet's life. While Mandeville's source is consistent in emphasising the close proximity of Mahometanism to Christianity, the *Travels* deviates from this model in depicting Mahomet, returning a reader to the polemical and popular tradition consolidated in *The Golden Legend*, the *Polychronicon* and the *Fall of Princes*. Following the familiar conventional details of his birth – that he was born poor in 'Araby' and was employed in 'marchaundyse' which led him into Egypt (which was at 'yt same tyme crysten') – Mandeville introduces a hitherto unmentioned episode. Visiting a hermit, 'when he came in to the chapel that was but a lytell hous & a lowe / as soone ye entre [entrance] began to be as grete as it were of a paleys [palace] gate / & that was the fyrst myracle that the saracyns saye that he dyd in his youth'.[93] Following this he became wealthy and, in accordance with the attribution of magical powers in Lydgate and 'wytchecraft' and 'castynge' in Higden, he becomes a 'grete astronomer'. Once he is made lord of 'Corodan' and has married the lady 'Quadryge', he 'felle often in the fallynge euill' (again as in Higden, Voragine and Lydgate), cynically presenting his fits

as divine visitations. Mandeville adds the detail that Mahomet reigned in 620 (as in Higden) and that 'he was of the kynde of Ismaell that was Abrahams sone yt he gate of Agar'.[94] To conclude this short life – which curiously includes no mention of the manner of Mahomet's death – we again find a new and subsequently influential episode.

In the anonymous *De statu Saracenorum*, 'Machometus' is schooled by a monk named Bahira, 'a simple Christian religious, of austere life', who recognises in him a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy and 'takes the young Machometus under his wing and teaches him to pray devoutly to Jesus, son of the Virgin Mary'.[95] A benevolent inspiration to the Prophet, this monk is killed by Machometus' followers who are jealous of his influence. This is in marked contrast to the representation of this myth in Mandeville:

> And also Machomet loued well a good man an hermite that dwelled in the wildernesse a myle from mounte Sinay … and Machomet went so often to this hermyte that all his men were wroth, for he harde gladly the hermit preach, and his men did walke all the night, and his men thought they would this hermyte were dead. So it befell on a night that Machomet was full dronken of good wine, and he fell in a slepe, and his men toke Machomet's sworde out of his sheath whyles he lay and slept, and therewith they slew the hermit, and afterwarde they put vp the sword againe all bloudy, and vpon the morrow when that he founde the hermite thus dead, he was in his mynde verye angry and right wroth, and woulde haue done his men vnto the death, but they all with one accorde, and with one will sayde that he himselfe hadde slaine hym whan he was dronken, and they shewed his owne swerd all bluddy, & than he beleued that they sayde soth, & than cursed the wine & all those that drank it. And therefore Sarasins that are deuout drinke no wine openly.[96]

The suggestion that Mahomet was gulled into believing he had killed his hermit mentor when suffering the effects of a hangover recalls the gruesome drunken death narrated by Higden and Lydgate, and here we are offered a deeply disturbing and unseemly image of an inebriated raging prophet. This drunken rage is specifically emphasised in the *Travels*. Although the details of the killing and the subsequent prohibition of wine are in the *Statu Saracenorum*, the compiler of the *Travels* decides to remove any reference to the Christianity of the monk Bahira, who is no more than an anonymous hermit from near Mount Sinay, although a 'good man'. The rage of Mahomet's followers against this hermit also seems largely irrational, certainly when compared with the anger motivated by the Christian influence he had wielded over his protégé in the *Statu*. Through careful editing this episode is thus made more polemical,

and with the addition of the earlier biographical material – Mahomet's astronomy and falling sickness in particular – a disjunction is introduced between an opening emphasis on points of Islamic/Christian convergence and the biography of Mahomet, in which he is presented as immoral, manipulative and incompatible with Christian expectations of prophethood. This may well have come from the compiler's reading of the widely circulated polemical life that is formed and reformed in this period – most probably, as in the earlier printed lives, in Beauvais's *Speculum*, and in particular Beauvais's paraphrasing of Petrus Alfoni's *Dialogues*.[97]

Rather than promoting the possibility of religious assimilation, which he does in his opening sections, Mandeville denies this possibility in his account of Mahomet. The implication is that Mahomet and the assimilation or conversion of 'Saracens' are irreconcilable, that the former must be discredited for the latter to succeed – perhaps a suggestion for missionary activity. This development means that, while differing in detail, the life of Mahomet presented in the *Travels* broadly concurs with the lives presented by Higden, Voragine and Lydgate. All agree on chronology; on his lordship of 'Corozan' and his marriage to 'Cadygan'; on the manipulation of his 'falling sickness'; that he was descended of Ishmael; that he produced the Alcoran; that he was involved in magic or astronomy; that he was a drunkard; and that he was associated with a monk or hermit. All consequently agree on the parameters of his character: positioned in distinction to celebrated saintly traits, Mahomet is hungry for power, prepared to deceive believers by fabricating divinity, sexually active (if not rapacious) and a drunkard epileptic, a condition with serious moral connotations for medieval and early modern readers. This could be no legitimate prophet.

That people read Mandeville's views on Mahomet and his beliefs is clear from the marking and illustration of extant manuscripts and printed texts, as with Higden's *Polychronicon*.[98] As Tzanaki has noted, many copies contain marginal notes surrounding the Mahomet sections: some draw attention only to the instance of the first 'miracle' and the years of Mahomet's birth and death; others – most notably the annotator of British Library's Sloane 1464 – seem fixated with the prophet, and pay close attention to the story of the murdered hermit and the resulting prohibition of wine, with this particular manuscript featuring extensive notes on both Mahomet and the 'Alcoran'.[99] Other annotators and transcribers alter Mandeville's original date of 509 for the beginning of Mahomet's rule as new and more accurate information became available.[100] These sections are also often illustrated: the British Library



Figure 4. 'Macamet' with halberd (c. 1415). From Mandeville's *Travels*.
© The British Library Board, Royal 17cxxxviii f. 33.

manuscript Royal 17 C xxxviii features an image of the 'Alcoran' on a plinth and Mahomet wearing a rounded hat and carrying a large halberd (see Figure 4), drawing attention to his military conquests – an aspect reflected in other accounts but absent from Mandeville.[101]

Of all the illustrations associated with Mandeville, the most intriguing is the woodcut that features in De Worde's printed edition of 1499, almost certainly the first image of Mahomet in an English printed text (Figure 5). Pynson's 1496 edition had no images, and De Worde turned to the woodcuts produced by Anton Sorg for Augsburg printer Martin Velser's 1482 Latin edition that were also incorporated into French and Spanish vernacular editions.[102] Other printed editions of Mandeville's *Travels* had generated very different illustrations that portrayed specific aspects of



Figure 5. Machomet treated for the 'falling evil'. *Here begynneth a lytell treatyse or booke named Johan Mau[n]deuyll knight born in Englonde in the towne of saynt Albone …* (London [Westminster]: Wynkyn De Worde, 1499) sig. J.4v. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, Inc. 5.J.1.2.

the account. For instance, Bernhard Richel's Basle edition of c. 1482 presented three different images for this short section (further signalling its perceived importance and those elements considered of particular interest), beginning with Mahomet as a merchant leading a camel, followed by an epileptic fit in front of his wife Cadygan, and finally his cursing of wine, in the form of outsized vines.[103]

De Worde's single image is mysterious in comparison because it does not obviously match any episode that Mandeville narrates. Following immediately after the slaying of the hermit, it depicts one standing male figure applying a burning torch to the bare foot of a second, prone male figure. There is no description of this kind of activity anywhere else in the *Travels*, so it is not a misplaced woodcut – the image remains in place in De Worde's 1510 edition, and is redrawn in the same manner for East's 1568 and 1582 editions (Figure 6).[104] Only in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century editions would it be removed in favour of an image traditionally accompanying an earlier episode in the text (De Worde's chapter 24): the martyrdom of St Stephen, which the publishers clearly felt corresponded more clearly with the hermit-slaying episode



Figure 6. Machomet treated for the 'falling evil'. *The voyages and trauailes of Sir John Mandeville knight wherein is treated of the way towards Hierusalem …* (London: Thomas Este, 1582?) sig. K.2v. By kind permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Douce MM 489.

(Figure 7).[105] In doing so they inadvertently reasserted the Christian identity of the hermit that the original compiler of the *Travels* had removed from the account he found in the *Statu Saracenorum*.

For Sorg this woodcut almost certainly depicted a contemporary treatment for epilepsy, reflecting – as so many medieval and early modern writers did – upon Mahomet's 'falling evil' as a certain affirmation of his lack of divinity. It is the second of two images in Sorg's *Travels*, the first of which clearly shows the aftermath of the slaying of the hermit. Mandeville's influence is demonstrated in Lucas van Leyden's use of this account, and most likely this image, for his celebrated engraving of 1508 depicting the same scene (Figure 8). This, and almost all of Sorg's woodcuts, closely follows the hand-drawn images in the Spencer manuscript of the *Travels*, now in the New York Public Library, as Nathalie Filliat has conclusively demonstrated.[106] The second image of Mahomet – curiously the only image De Worde chooses to reproduce – is exceptionally and curiously absent from the Spencer manuscript, instead perhaps derived from an unknown medical treatise on epilepsy. Certainly the use of fire as a curative was not unusual. Galen had defined the 'falling sickness' as 'a phlegmatic disease of a cold and moist nature', indicating that heat might redress a cold imbalance, and consequently Saranus had advocated trephining involving the application 'of burning heat to the head'.[107] However Andrew Boorde, writing



Figure 7. The slaying of the hermit / martyrdom of St Stephen. *The voyages & travels of Sir John Mandevile, Knight wherein is set down the way to the Holy Land …* (London: printed for Rich. Chiswell, B. Walford, Mat. Wotton, and Geo. Conyers, 1696) p. 69. © The British Library Board, G.6718.

in England in his *A compendyous regiment of a dyetary of healthe* (1547), advised against bringing epileptics into contact with fire because it will 'induce the sycknes'.[108]

The first image of Mahomet to appear in an English printed text seems, aptly, to have arisen from a misunderstanding. Owsei Temkin has written:

> Epilepsy was included among the infectious diseases enumerated in the verse of the so-called *Schola Salernitana*, where it was named *pedicon*. This term is nothing but a variant of the Greek *paidion*, given as a synonym for epilepsy by Galen and other ancient writers and meaning 'children's disease'. But many medieval authors, not knowing Greek and misled by a consonance, referred it to the Latin *pes*, i.e. foot, whence arose all kind of etymological speculations. Some connected it with the epileptic's kicking of the legs; others with an alleged evil smell of his feet.[109]

Sorg, and De Worde following him, thus presumably intended this image to be an instantly recognisable indicator of epilepsy, as no doubt Richel did with his woodcut of a prone Mahomet before his wife. It may



Figure 8. Machomet sleeping as his follower slays the hermit. Engraving. Lucas van Leyden, 1508. © Mary Evans Picture Library.

possibly be the first Christian depiction of moxibustion, the Chinese medical therapy involving herbs burnt onto the patient's skin (although conventionally the first reference to this practice does not appear until the late seventeenth century).[110] In all of these illustrations – aside,

perhaps, from Richel's camel – there is little to indicate an Arabian provenance for Mahomet, or an Arabian setting. This might easily be ascribed to the limitations of the medium if Leyden's extraordinary engraving (Figure 8) had not placed the hermit-slaying episode on the edge of what appears to be an alpine forest, a background pattern that he used repeatedly in his early engravings: see particularly, for instance, the woods and thatched cottage providing the backdrop to 'The Temptation of St. Anthony' (1509), but similar landscapes appear in 'The Holy Family' (c. 1508), 'Abraham Renouncing Hagar' (c. 1508) and 'Jeptha greeted by his daughter' (c. 1508).[111]

Unlike Mandeville's careful pinpointing of this incident – 'in wyldernesse a myle from mount Synay in the way as men go fro araby to Caldee and ynde a dayes iournie fro the se[a] where marchauntes of Venys came' – these illustrations become, like those of popular Biblical scenes, temporally and geographically detached from their original settings, movable feasts whose contemporary trappings enhance the enduring relevance of their concerns.[112] Note, for example, the ominous symbolism of the huge gourd hanging from a prominent tree. If Leyden does offer an 'eastern' dimension, it is in Mahomet's clothing and turban (although turbans of different kinds feature regularly in Renaissance Christian art), just as the physician applying flames to Mahomet's foot might be considered to be wearing an 'eastern' headdress.[113]

There is no doubt that Mandeville's *Travels* was an important and influential text across northern Europe, and particularly in England, supposed to be the place of his birth. Nor should there be any doubt that readers gave Mandeville's depiction of Mahomet and his 'lawe' particular attention, absorbing, annotating and circulating both manuscript and print versions. The *Travels* incorporated distinctive and surprising details when compared to those versions in the *Polychronicon*, the *Golden Legend* and the *Fall of Princes*. What is more, the printed *Travels* gave physical form to Mahomet, depicting his mortal frailty, drawing attention (as all the other lives had done) to his prime deficiency – his 'falling evil' – forcing readers to reflect upon his cynical manipulation of it and the consequent impossibility of his divinity. Mandeville's version of the life denies the possibility of Christian/Mahometan assimilation offered in the earlier chapters, and through careful editing the compiler of the *Travels* brought his account into congruence with those offered by Higden, Voragine and Lydgate. With the printing of these four accounts in the vernacular in the final decade of the fifteenth century, an English Mahomet had been formed.

IV. MAHOMET AND THE EXCLUSIVE POLEMIC

Two texts printed in the early sixteenth century differ markedly from those lives of Mahomet that played minor parts in much larger works. Those considerable volumes discussed already – the *Polychronicon*, the *Golden Legend*, the *Fall of Princes* and Mandeville's *Travels* – had in their different ways all used polemical material from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for their lives of Mahomet. Each sought to educate; all had been popular in manuscript before appearing in print. Their printing in the vernacular represented a financially dependable and relatively uncontroversial first canon of English printed texts. Circumstances shifted rapidly, as new printers sought to cash in on the production of shorter, cheaper texts, and established printers attempted to capitalise on their back catalogue – and again Mahomet is at the centre of this new print culture. The first two works solely concerned with Mahomet and Mahometanism in English were produced in this competitive commercial environment, as aggressive Ottoman expansion into Persia, Eastern Christendom and the Mediterranean generated an increasingly vituperative version of the life.

Here begynneth a lytell treatise of the turkes lawe called Alcaron. And also it speketh of Machamet the Nygromancer appeared from the print shop of Wynkyn de Worde on Fleet Street in 1519, and features a title (following Caxton) reminiscent of many of his other texts – the title to his 1499 edition of the *Travels* began: *Here begynneth a lytell treatyse or booke named Johan Mau[n]deuyll knight*. It has often been treated as a distinct work by critics, but it is actually an attempt by De Worde to exploit the popularity of his 1499, 1500, 1503 and 1510 editions of Mandeville, and in particular of the life of Mahomet it contained. Aside from a virulently opprobrious and bombastic introduction, it is otherwise an unattributed reproduction of Mandeville's narrative, with newly incorporated illustrations. This 'lytell treatise' begins in a polemical vein:

> For to knowe and to here some newe tydynges for to refresche ye menes wyttes and vnderstandynge. So wyll I somewhat wryte of ye turkes lawes/ whiche law in many poyntes accordeth wt our lawe & is ye lawe of Machomet/ ye whiche in his lawe vsed a worde occidite. That is to saye kylle. So all them yt wyll not byleue in theyr lawe they slee [slay] them. And yt is against ye lawe of oure lorde Ihesu cryst/ for he byddeth yt we shall loue them yt loue not vs and praye for oure enemys. And ye turkes ben charged [forced] to theyr byleue. But the crysten people be not soo/ but ameyably lerned & teched. And whan yt the predycante or prechour shal go to preche theyr fals byleue he hath a naked swerde in his hande as long as his sermon shall endure & last. Or elles he putteth ye sayd swerde in a hyghe place wher as euery body may beholde it yt is there for to fere

and threten them therwithall. And we crysten people putteth a crucyfyxe in the myddes of ye chyrche on hyghe for humylyte & not for fere or thretenynge lyke as the turkes do the foresaid swerde.[114]

Immediately following this last sentence, De Worde shifts to the beginning of the equivalent section in the *Travels* – 'And so forthe I wyll procede and wryte of theyr lawes and boke'. Besides this opening, there are a number of alterations in the main text. Rather than simply refer to 'he', De Worde refers to 'this fals nygromancer Mahomet' (note the shift in spelling from 'Machomet'); similarly instead of 'great astronomer', the prophet becomes 'a fals nygromancer'. This loaded term, not in earlier editions of the *Travels*, brings the text further into line with the polemical politics of Higden and Lydgate, both of whom use it in exactly the same context, suggesting De Worde's familiarity with the now dominant form of the life in English: he had printed an edition of the *Polychronicon* in 1495.

The themes of this new introductory paragraph are commensurate with these alterations, offering a new frame for Mandeville's text. The intention to educate a lay audience in such matters remains foregrounded – 'to refresche ye menes wyttes and vnderstandynge' – while the shift from 'Saracens' in the *Travels* to 'Turkes' in the second sentence here demonstrates a desire to make this material contemporary and respond to the advances of the Ottoman 'Turk'. Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the westward advances of Mehmed II ('the Conqueror'), his grandson Selim I, who had come to the throne in 1512, had led the Ottomans on an series of successful campaigns – into Persia in 1514, Anatolia and Kurdistan in 1515, Syria and Egypt in 1516 and Arabia in 1517. Such depredations, imagined as the prelude to renewed Ottoman advances westward, surely motivate the new emphasis on violence: an accompanying illustration features a sword-wielding preacher before his flock, derived from Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Liber peregrinationis*.[115]

The association of Mahomet and his 'belefe' with violence was long established. The first translation of the Qur'ān into Latin, the *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete* completed by Robert of Ketton in 1143, features the questioning annotation, 'Why then dost thou teach that men are to be converted to thy religion by the sword?'[116] Oliver of Paderborn reported that Mahometanism 'began by the sword, was maintained by the sword and by the sword it would be ended' – it was upheld by 'worldly and human fear'.[117] Riccoldo da Montecroce, as reproduced in a later English text, recorded a speech purportedly made by Mahomet. In it he asserts, 'I am not sent to shewe myracles but to shewe the swerde'.[118] There are many other examples. Focusing solely on violence in this opening heightens



Figure 9. Machomet preaching / Antichrist preaching. *Here begynneth a lytell treatise of the turkes lawe called Alcaron. And also it speketh of Machamet the Nygromancer* (London: Wynkyn De Worde, 1515?) – facing titlepage.
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conflict between the Christian ideal of love espoused by 'oure lorde Ihesu cryst' and the relentless violence of the 'turkes'. This is curious because it appears to contradict the emphasis on theological common ground and the potential for conversion at the heart of Mandeville's depiction of the 'Saracenic' religion, which is included wholesale here. Indeed, aside from these opening lines, and a few choice polemical alterations, the text is nearly identical to that in the *Travels*.

The images are, however, quite distinct. The second woodcut (Figure 9), accompanying the first full page of text, is more complex and appears to

depict Mahomet preaching to the populace. He stands in a pulpit to the right of the scene, a leering grotesque devil leaning over his left shoulder, whispering in his ear. To the left, two bearded divines stand in another pulpit, attempting to win a rather apathetic public to their righteous cause. While those few on the left seem uninterested, the sheer numbers gathering before Mahomet demonstrate the allure and danger of his Satanic doctrine. The close proximity of devils to the prophet, whether as actors in a fiery vision of hell or as Mephistophelian conspirators in scenes of oratory like this one, features often in Medieval and Renaissance art.[119] The oppositional structure of this image clearly corresponds to the themes of De Worde's new introduction rather than to any scenario detailed in the *Travels*.

More emphatically polemical is the fact that this woodcut had been used by De Worde before. In a text printed in 1505 (and again in 1506) titled *The arte or crafte to lyue well and to dye well*, translated from a French original by Andrew Chertsey, this image features in a chapter titled 'Here begynneth the treatyse of ye comynge of Antecryst'.[120] The intention is surely to create a visual parallel between Mahomet and the Antichrist, one reinforced by the presence of the devil at the former's shoulder, because images of the Antichrist preaching accompanied by devils were common (and appear elsewhere in Chertsey's text).[121] Edward Hodnett has speculated that the two bearded divines to the left are Moses and Aaron, but, regardless of their specific identity, De Worde's intention is clear: to characterise Mahomet as an antichrist and Mahometanism in total opposition to Christianity.[122] The surprise is that he chose a text so unsuited to the task. This edition represents a further step away from the original focus upon conversion, its contradictions indicating De Worde's intention to capitalise on demand as rapidly as possible, and the centrality of Mahomet to any English understanding of the Ottoman 'Turk'.

The second single volume is ostensibly more consistent and more coherent in its demonisation. Following the accession of Suleiman I ('the Magnificent') in 1522, the eastward and southward advances of his father were continued westward, culminating in the portentous siege of Vienna in 1529. This was a true crisis for European Christendom. *Here after followeth a lytell treatyse agaynst Mahumet and his cursed secte*, printed by Peter Treveris in 1531, responds to and was intended to profit from the infamy of this Ottoman campaign and the celebrations that accompanied the lifting of the siege. Richard Rex has recently identified the otherwise anonymous author as Christopher St German (a lawyer and legal writer, and an important figure in negotiating Henry VIII's break with Rome)

following John Bale's catalogue of his works.[123] This identification is further confirmed, as Rex points out, by the reappearance of a chapter of this work in St German's *Salem and Bizance* (1533). The *lytell treatise* is a remarkably detailed work, but its attitudes towards Mahomet are in no doubt from the opening lines. Closely following Caxton's earlier justification for printing the *Polychronicon* and the *Golden Legend*, St German argues that it is 'expedyent that treuthe & vertue be knowen amonge the people' and thus 'it is also right good and profytable that falshed and crafte be knowen to the intente they maye be the rather abhorryd and fledde'.[124] As in Erasmus's near-contemporary *De Bello Turcico*, Mahometanism is simultaneously an exemplar of innate vice and an encroaching alien enemy, both of which must be fought by Christian men and women. The battle against Mahomet is both internal and external, both real and metaphorical.[125]

Categoric refutation of Mahomet – and through him his followers – is urgently necessary because through the 'false lawe that he & his dyscyples craftely ymagenyd and feynd / mo people haue ben desceyued & mo fouley dampnyd than euer haue ben by any heretyke or cursyd man syth his tyme / & as some men haue supposed syth the passion of our lorde'.[126] Craft and falsehood are prominent, as is the parallel with Christ, whose centrality is further affirmed by an image of the crucifixion on the title page – his suffering a synecdoche of all those 'desceyued' by Mahomet and those Christians threatened and conquered by the Ottomans. Later in the text such sentiments lead to a joint lament for the loss of Jerusalem, Constantinople and 'the countree of Grece' and a call for crusade, along with a lengthy millenarian diatribe on the inevitable fall of Mahometanism drawn from Wolfgang Aytinger's 1496 commentary on the revelation of St Methodius.[127] The *lytell treatise* is thus an attack upon Mahomet on multiple fronts, marshalling prophecy, holy war and long-established exegetical arguments to refute his faith and to give heart to Christian believers.

To attack and defeat Mahomet St German drew on a few key sources aside from Aytinger: Alfonso de la Espina's late fifteenth-century *Fortalitium fidei*; a popular topography of the holy land from the same period, Bernard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio in terram Sanctam*; and an anonymous text, *Libellus de moribus turcorum*, written around 1481 but printed with a preface by Martin Luther in 1530 in another response to the Ottoman campaign of 1529.[128] There is inevitably an older tradition underlying these sources, however, in particular Espina's *Fortalitium fidei*, which borrows 'repeatedly and extensively' from medieval sources, most

notably Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogi* and Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* (which Luther would also go on to translate and publish in 1542), from which a number of chapters here appear to have been lifted nearly verbatim.[129] That St German's attack is conducted in the vernacular indicates the existence of a reading English public keen to engage with such urgent matters, and a desire to reach as wide a constituency as possible, so that 'euery man that can rede Englysshe maye the more lyghtely perceyue the falsenes of the sayd lawe / and finally to abhore it and dyspyse yt'.[130] Given these ambitions, it is revealing that St German chooses to begin with 'the byrthe / and some parte of the wretchyd lyfe of the sayd Mahumet that was the first begynner of that cursed lawe'.[131]

Readers are then presented with the life, starting with 'the byrthe of Mahumet' and ending eight chapters later with 'the wretched and vnhappy dethe of Mahumet'. Amongst the biographical details St German repeatedly digresses to consider at length 'the pryncypall errours of the lawe of Mahumet' (chapter three); the contradictory nature of the Qur'ān (chapter four); the 'lyes' contained in this 'lawe' (chapter five); the 'grete desyre' of the Saracens to have 'crysten men in theyr captiuitie' (chapter six); and a detailed rebuttal of 'an vntrewe and faynd vysyon / that Mahumet sayd he had' (chapter seven). Aside from the life itself (on which he writes little) and the sixth chapter, all of this polemical refutation comes from Riccoldo da Montecroce. The seamless transition from the life of the prophet to the Qur'ān to contemporary Ottoman depravity and back to the life reveals again the ways in which Mahomet provided a focal point and structure for Christian responses to his 'lawe' and to the Ottomans.

St German begins with some details familiar from earlier English lives, and some less so. 'Arabye' is again the primary location, and the devotional context in which young Mahomet is brought up is again the idolatrous worship of Venus. Later in the text his birth is given as 23 April 696, 'as mooste writers saye', when 'Bonyface the fourth' was pope and 'focas' (Phocas) emperor. We are told his father's name was 'Abdemenech' (other sources give the same name or variants of it, such as Habedileth) and we learn that the name Mahomet conveniently means 'confusyon' – convenient because 'he by the cursed lawe that he afterwarde fayned / brought hym selfe ad all his folowers to eternall confusyon'.[132] On the death of his parents (his mother is not named) he is taken by his uncle 'Abdemutalla' to a place called Salingua and there 'worshipped ydols with all his kyndred'. What follows is another version of the Coryzania/Cadygan narrative which, although lacking any mention of the Sergius

figure, is otherwise similar to that reproduced by Higden, Lydgate and Voragine (Treveris, the printer of this text, had produced an edition of the *Polychronicon* in 1527).[133] Mahomet's close proximity to Jews and Christians on his mercantile errands is typically highlighted, given that it was from them 'he lerned many thynges of the olde lawe & of the newe lawe' and subsequently became 'a grete nygromancer'.[134]

St German's second chapter goes further than the standard life. The assertion that he had gained power only having assumed the riches of his wife remains, but here Mahomet is consumed by a desire for more. Having only a few followers and – another important factor to these lives – being 'but of a lowe blode', he turned to 'crafte' and 'dissymulyd hym selfe to be the prophet and messenger of god'. Class continues to be emphasised: Mahomet drew to himself 'rude people that lyghtly myght be desceyuyd / and that knewe not what yt ment to be a prophet or a messenger of god / ne that coulde no thynge iudge bytwene trouthe and falshed'. Having cynically manipulated the most vulnerable to found his erroneous faith, he then used them as 'vacabundes / murderers / and theues' to rob on his behalf.[135] When he was persecuted at Mecca he took away by force 'a poore mannes house to make for hym selfe a temple' and, following a litany of 'euylles / wronges / & murders' he caused an old Jew 'to be strangeled in his bed bycause he sayd he had rebuked hym'.[136] St German's purpose in relating such despicable episodes is to demonstrate (as with so many other examples) the impossibility of divine sanction – that it cannot be, as Mahomet 'wryteth of hym selfe', that 'he was sente with mercy and pytye'. Further proof of the falsehoods of this 'cursed prophet … full of inyquytye' follows a martial defeat in which Mahomet was grievously wounded 'vpon the vpper lyppe and his cheke bones were broken and hys nether tethe stryken out and all hys face myserably torne'. Mahomet had often said, St German gleefully tells his readers, that 'he had .x. aungelles assynygned to hym by god to kepe hym that he sholde not be hurte at no tyme'. By this once more 'he was openly conuyncyd to be a lyer'.[137]

Events surrounding his death again affirm the impossibility of Mahomet's prophethood. St German refers to his contracting of 'the grete dysease & greuous sykeness callyd Epilentica passio / or Morbus cadurus / wherupon he fell many tymes and bete his hed to the grounde and lay fomynge and spyttynge'. Cadygan, shocked at this 'abhomynable syght' into a reconsideration of her marriage to 'so vyle a man', is then persuaded (as in earlier acounts) that these fits are visitations from the Angel Gabriel. Yet this 'cursyd prophete … the grettest desceyuour of the worlde' eventually fell deeply ill with the condition and seven days later

'he yeldyd vp hys wretchyd spyryte anone to be taken to the fendys of hell and forth with his bely swellyd and hys lytell fynger crokyd togyder', on Monday the seventh day of the first moon. He was, according to this account, sixty-three years old at his exemplary end, of which twenty-three had been spent 'in his cursyd prophecye'.

Unlike Higden, Voragine and Mandeville, St German reflects upon the events following Mahomet's death, since they prove his point:

> […] yt ys not to be forgotten that in his lyfe he commanndyd his dyscyples and frendes that they sholde not bury hym forthwith as he was ded / for he sayd that vpon the thyrde day after he sholde be takyn in to heuen / and so when he was ded they obeyenge his commaundement sufferyd hym to lye styll / not onely thre dayes after his deth but .xii. dayes to se when he sholde be takyn into heuen / and at the laste they were wery with kepynge of hym / and perceyuynge in hym nothynge but an intollerable stynke that dayly increasyd in hym / at the last with grete indygnacyon they threwe hys wretchyd body nakyd without any honour in to the grounde. This was the miserable ende of Mahumet.[138]

As with other variations of this death, which again adheres to the providential demise of all arch heretics, the sheer physicality of the decaying corpse is an emphatic confirmation of a lack of divinity, but also of a misguided intent to emulate Christ. Accounts of this episode go back to the ninth-century Asturian *Prophetic Chronicle*.[139] Even with this the deception is not complete. Mahomet's 'moost subtyll and crafty' follower 'Ebubeer' built him a splendid tomb in 'Mecha' which (following the well-known account in Gautier de Compiègne's twelfth-century text *De otia Machometi*) is 'sete aboute with yron and set secretely Adamantys', the magnetic properties of which cause the tomb to float mysteriously in the air (this phenomenon is also referenced by Premierfait, Lydgate's source). The people thus continue to be fooled, to 'abyde in that errour […] so they walke all in darkness and at the last shall be cast in to the outwarde darkness in hell'.[140]

The policy of detailed confutation in order to disprove divinity comprehensively is continued and elaborated across the third, fourth and fifth chapters, all taken from Riccoldo, who had honed this method, crafting a narrative of Mahomet that rendered him and his 'lawe' fundamentally irrational.[141] The first refutation explicitly affirms the bias of the early English printed accounts towards an heretical conception of the prophet: 'All the heresyes', it argues, 'that the deuyll hathe infected other heretykes within tyme past: as one in this heresye and in a nother in that / he holly infected this cursyd man Mahumet in all / & ouer that the sayd Mahumet holdeth some heresyes that none other heretyke hath holden

but he'. What follows is a long and detailed heretical genealogy, elements of which are later reproduced in some seventeenth-century texts, the best known probably Alexander Ross's 'Caveat' to the first translation of the Qur'ān into English, the controversial *Alcoran of Mahomet* (1649).[142] Presenting Mahomet as an heretical composite denied even novelty – his was simply a predictable agglomeration of mistaken and cynical religious perversions.

As Peter the Venerable and other medieval authorities had noted, with Sabellius Mahomet denies the trinity; with Arius and Enomius he argues that Christ is of 'a lesse essence' than that of God; he agrees with Carpocrates that Christ was not God (although, like Mandeville and others, it is acknowledged that he accepts Christ to be 'the moost holy and the moost wysest man and the gretest prophet that euer was'). In affirming an inevitable schism if God had ever had a son, Mahomet aligns himself with the 'Iewes and the heretyke Sardonycus'; he denies the passion and mysteries of the church along with the 'Donates'; he concurs with Origen that devils may be saved; he agrees with the Anthropomorphites that consider God of corporeal substance, and that the holy ghost is a creature along with Macedonius. His infamous paradise of fleshly delights is an imitation of 'Cyrynthus' and 'some other olde infydels'; he authorises circumcision as 'Eubyonys' did; he permits men to 'use' other men's wives indiscriminately with the 'Nycholaytes'. The use of 'worldely delytes' to allure new followers worked especially well amongst the Arabians, who 'moche delyte in glotonye / thefte and intemperauncye'. Finally, Mahomet forbade any dissent under pain of death, insisted that God had revealed his coming to the Jews, and could offer no proof of this or any of his 'lawe' in the form of miracles, but only by his sword. He said that 'he was not sent of god for to shewe the gyfte of myracles / but to share the power of armes'.[143] The lack of any claim on Mahomet's part to be able to perform divine acts in this traditional manner is, for St German, a sure indicator of an absence of divinity and a divergence from the earlier printed lives which insisted that miracles had been elaborately faked.

Figuring Mahomet as the product and culmination of a patchwork of earlier heresies – which, aside from the added detail, is St German's primary contribution to the English Mahomet – serves different purposes. Foremost is a determination to demonstrate exhaustively that there is very little new about Mahomet: his 'infynyte' errors are borrowed from heresies already examined and rejected by the church. He is undoubtedly a threat, but characterising him in terms of prior heresies, particularly those of the infamous Arius, offered a ready-made polemical framework in which he

might be contained. Consequently, Mahomet's heresy provides a conceptual means through which he can be popularly understood. As argued earlier in reference to the first printed lives, the heretical biography – itself an inversion of the saintly opposite – had recognisable characteristics, positioning its subject in an antagonistic but also an affirmatory relationship with the church and its doctrine. Following from this, recognising Mahomet to be an arch-heretic also denies his 'lawe' any status as an opposing religious system. It is designated as a sect, an error, a perverted offshoot of the true church of God. John Wycliffe, for example, considered it alongside other 'sects' whose followers could be saved (because of their proximity to Christianity), but only those who turned away from 'Mahomet' and 'at the moment of death believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be judged to be faithful Christians'.[144]

St German's polemical tract adds a great deal to early modern English notions of Mahometanism and augments – while largely confirming – the life depicted in De Worde's appropriation of Mandeville and those largely monastic works reproduced by Higden, Voragine, Lydgate and Mandeville himself. The Cadygan/Corozania narrative, with its strong emphasis on heresy, epilepsy and, above all, cynical and vindictive 'crafte', had become the mainstay of English lives of Mahomet, all of which were fundamentally based upon material 'well rehearsed in books old'. This crafting of the life into a newly effective polemical tool was motivated, alongside many similar texts across Christendom, by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople – the 'second Rome' – in May 1453. The apparently relentless Ottoman advance that followed, into areas once considered Christian heartlands, then generated the *lytell treatise*, the first text in English to incorporate the life of Mahomet into a comprehensive exposition on his 'lawe' and offer a programme for its refutation and elimination. Conquered and enslaved Christians needed to be returned to the fold; Christian sin and discord had to be corrected; Ottoman advances had to be stopped.

However, as Richard Rex has noted, St German's willingness to lambast Mahomet for denying any rational critique of his 'lawe' and the 'Alcoran' clearly prefigures his later attack upon Catholic clergy for 'seeking to smother healthy criticism and honest discussion with blanket accusations of heresy'.[145] In his *Dialogue betwene Clemente and Bernarde* (1532), St German made this comparison explicit.[146] The mapping of Mahometanism onto the Roman Catholic church had profound ramifications – only a few years after the publication of the *lytell treatise*, Henry VIII broke English ties with Rome and the papacy, throwing previous

certainties into confusion and fundamentally shifting the nature and focus of religious polemic. St German's strategy is typical of many of his contemporaries, and leads us to question what Mahomet's 'sect' and its heretical believers meant in the new circumstances of Reformation. What was heresy in newly heretical England? Who was now 'most like to Mahomet'?

CHAPTER 2

'Most Like to Mahomet': Religious History and Reformation Mutability

Reformation changed the ways in which Mahomet was used in England. The narrative of his life established in the early printed texts remained, but new emphases in religious observance, a different alignment of religious and secular authority and a reorientation of England's position in European Christendom changed what Mahomet meant for the early modern English. Confutation coexisted with appropriation as different sides in the schism struggled to define their doctrinal positions and to castigate their opponents as devotees of Mahomet, and as worse than Mahomet. Across the sixteenth century such conflicts intruded into all spheres of English life, generating Mahomets in unlikely places, from embroideries in great houses to the decorative schemes of individual prayerbooks.

During the five decades between England's first printing press and Henry VIII's break with Rome, the appetite for personal piety was not solely supplied by substantial volumes like the *Polychronicon* and shorter individual polemics. Alongside the profitable production of papal indulgences, an array of printed primers catered for devotional needs that had previously been provided for by manuscript Books of Hours.[1] The relative cheapness, numerous editions, and wide circulation of the printed primer meant that its use extended across social spheres to which it would have been largely inaccessible in earlier forms. The popularity of such primers is attested by the numbers that were produced – around 1,600 editions before 1530 – and which have survived, but this may also give an impression of the care with which they were kept, personally annotated and passed down through generations.[2] The first Tudor primers, like the earlier Books of Hours, supplemented elements of the Calendar, the

The title is taken from the following passage in Melchior Adam, *The life and death of Dr. Martin Luther* (London: I.L. for John Stafford, 1643): 'The Popes Legate also accused Luther at the Norician assembly; as being most like to Mahomet. For as the Turkes by Polygamy, so Luther taking away the vowes of Chastity doth loose the reines to all licentiousnesse, and ouerthrow the state of the Church' (p. 55).

Office of the Dead, the Suffrage of the Saints, the Penitential Psalms, the Breviary and other additional texts with a carefully crafted and suitably sacred decorative scheme. As Eamon Duffy has written, such printed primers were 'often elaborately decorated, with marginal, initial, and full-page illustrations to amplify and complement the text'.[3]

These illustrations might include 'scenes from the lives of Mary and Jesus, usually flanked by Old Testament types derived from works such as the *Biblia pauperum*' with 'versions of the *danse macabre* and other catechetical illustrations such as representations of the sacraments, or the Sybils and the cardinal [as well as theological] virtues'.[4] The purpose of such decoration was to augment and affirm the message of the text for both literate and non-literate audiences. The portrayal of the virtues is particularly noteworthy: one popular Sarum primer features a procession of virtues embodied in female figures standing upon the male personification of their antithetical vices. Repeated later in the text, the sequence continues for seven pages with two marginal figures to each page, and pairs Hope with Judas, Charity with Herod, Justice with Nero, Prudence with Sardanapalus, Temperance with Tarquin and Force with Holofernes.[5] The first of the whole scheme – the primary theological virtue – is Faith (*foy* or *fides*) dressed in the modest garments of a nun, seated on a platform before a star-filled night sky and beneath an elaborate gothic architectural canopy. She holds the symbols of the new and old churches: in her right hand the church itself, in her left the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Beneath her feet is crushed the figure of 'Machomet' (Figures 10 and 11).

As Adolf Katzenellenbogen has demonstrated, the widespread medieval practice 'of representing moral concepts in personified form goes back to a classical tradition' but found defining expression in the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius in the early fifth century.[6] The motif of a virtue standing in triumph over a vanquished foe is similarly based on an ancient iconographic tradition, but became a particularly important Christian image from the ninth century onwards, and was repeatedly elaborated.[7] This type of triumphal figure was also not necessarily a direct personification of virtue: Biblical figures such as David or Job, various saints or Christ in majesty might be incorporated.[8] By the eleventh century, however, female embodiments of the primary virtues (with their attendant attributes) had become a well-known visual scheme, explored in numerous manuscript works and appearing as decorative motifs in detailed theological texts and on the facades of great medieval cathedrals such as Amiens, Strasbourg and Notre Dame.[9]

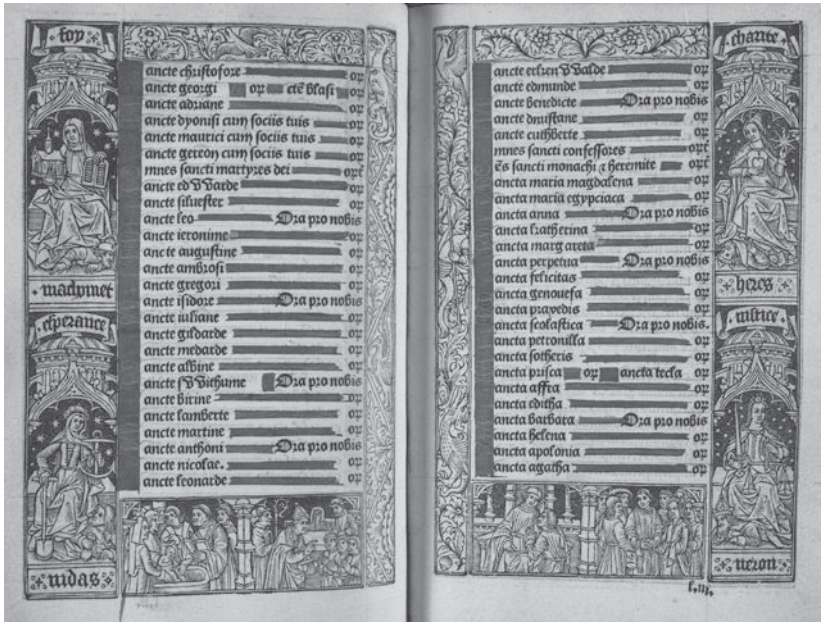


Figure 10. Sarum primer with virtues trampling vices (Foy and Machomet top left). *Horae presentes ad Sarum* (impresse furint Parisius: Per Philippe pigouchet, Anno salutis. M.CCCC .xcviii. die vero. xvi. Maii. pro Symone Vostre, 1498) sig. G.4v. © The British Library Board, IA.40335.

The sequence of female virtues crushing male vices found in the early Tudor primers was therefore already of great antiquity and widely understood across Christendom by its emergence in the late fifteenth century. This specific version is found in primers printed in Paris for both the English and French markets by Philippe Pigouchet for Simon Vostre, editions of which remain extant from 1498 and 1502, and in Augsburg for the German market by Johann Schonsperger (it also appears in primers printed by Thielman Kerver). This Anglo-French cross-Channel trade is not as unusual as it might at first seem: Pigouchet was one of a group of Parisian printers (including Kerver, Higman, Hardouyn, Regnault and Verard) who were at the very forefront of printed textual production, generating 90 per cent of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century editions of Hours.[10] In this specific case, as Joan Evans has suggested, this vice/virtue scheme corresponds to images initially 'stereotyped' by Italian engravers and subsequently 'many French and Netherlandish engravers – notably



Figure 11. Detail from the upper left of Figure 10. *Horae presentes ad Sarum* (impresse furint Parisius: Per Philippe pigouchet, Anno salutis. M.CCCC .xcviii. die vero. xvi. Maii. pro Symone Vostre, 1498) sig. G.4v. © The British Library Board, IA.40335.

Etienne de Laune – provided further series of models of virtues, vices, arts, sciences and the rest for craftsmen in the various arts'.[11] In these earlier Italian examples (and indeed in the early Christian) Mahomet does not feature at all. Instead, in the twelfth-century examples Katzenellenbogen has identified, Faith is opposed with 'Idolatria', while in the later Italian model for this Tudor sequence Faith crushes the arch-heretic Arius.[12]

Mahomet eventually appears in this sequence for the same reasons printers like De Worde were producing individual polemical works about him. He had been overwhelmingly identified as a heretic (repeatedly associated with Arius), perhaps the greatest heretic the world had seen, and in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople he had come to represent the greatest existing threat to the Christian faith. Depicting Faith easily crushing the founder of Mahometanism was no simple wish fulfilment either: this image indicates the ease and inevitability of Christian victory and Mahomet's humiliation. As an aid to devotion, it was intended to remind a reader of the conflicts faced by their fellow Christians elsewhere in Christendom, encourage their prayers and comfort them with the knowledge that this latest manifestation of idolatry



Figure 12. 'Fides' – the fourth of the *Los Honores* tapestry series. *Los Honores* (Brussels, 1523). © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid.

was part of a divine scheme which had ensured the defeat of Mahomet's predecessors. In these sequences Mahomet is positioned as the prime opponent of the central Christian virtue, replacing and supplementing Arius and, before him, Idolatria. Alongside the increasing polemicisation of the standardised life, and its greater circulation, this shift indicates the newly central position Mahomet had come to occupy in northern European Christian thought. This single image also has quite an afterlife. It first appears in a truly remarkable setting: as the centrepiece to 'Fides', one of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V's celebrated *Los Honores* tapestries (Figure 12).

In the Sarum primers of 1498 and 1502 little distinguishes Mahomet from the other male vices. Nero wears a crown, and Judas clings to a bag of silver, but Mahomet's base corporeality (as in the contemporary lives) is emphasised – he is a nondescript bearded man in modest clothing. In the 'Fides' tapestry the paring of Fides and 'Machvmetvs' is at the very heart of the composition (again he is clearly named to avoid any confusion in identification), with Mahomet offered up to the viewer on a golden plinth. The entire scene is conspicuous in its extravagance, not least the figure of Fides, who stands upon a Mahomet in opulent robes and a magnificent golden turban (Figure 13). With his left hand he grasps a clasped and heavily bound volume, certainly intended to represent the book of his 'lawe', the Alcoran. His close identification with this text (as in earlier accounts) asserts his authorship and thus the fabrication of



Figure 13. Detail from the centre of Figure 12. 'Fides' – the fourth of the *Los Honores* tapestry series. *Los Honores* (Brussels, 1523). © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid.

its supposed divinity. As with each of the female virtues – all of whom appear from the earlier primer sequence – Fides looks disdainfully down upon her foe, but Mahomet, like the other vices, stares out of the tapestry, perhaps indicating his pathetic subjection, or an identification with the fallen viewer. Guy Delmarcel has noted that this particular tapestry owes some of its imagery to an established tradition of representing the virtues, but it seems the specific use of the 'procession of the virtues' scheme presented in the early printed primers has not previously been noted.[13] There seems little doubt that this sequence is the source. Each symbolic element of the primer sequence is reproduced here, yet in the tapestry the primacy of the Fides/Mahomet pairing is even more graphically asserted. Here the remaining virtues and the attending throng are organised around Fides and her raised throne as votaries. The result is that the subjection of Mahomet occupies the very centre point of the composition, observed, celebrated and affirmed by all.

Mahomet's central role indicates the scale of his threat – and the threat of his book – but also his incorporation into imperial iconography. The *Los Honores* sequence of nine tapestries (Fortuna, Prudentia, Virtus, Fides,

Honor, Fama, Justitia, Nobilitas, Infamia) was designed by Bernard van Orley and Jan Gossaert and woven in the Brussels workshop of Pieter van Aelst. It was created specifically for Charles V's 1520 coronation as Holy Roman Emperor, and despite some initial financial difficulties it became a key visual component of his touring court. The *Los Honores* tapestries were designed to instruct their new owner in the arts of good governance, and are listed as one of the sets carried with him on his continual travels in an inventory of 1544, alongside the 'most renowned and best documented' tapestries of the collection, the twelve-part *Siege of Tunis* sequence.[14] As Jerry Brotton and Lisa Jardine have written, 'from the beginning of Charles' reign, tapestries were the visual focus of his self-presentation as a supremely powerful, virtuous and legitimate imperial sovereign'.[15] His assumption of a crusading mantle and his victories over the Mahometan 'infidel' were important elements of this self-fashioning. The *Tunis* series, completed in 1554 at vast expense, celebrated in remarkable detail Charles's conquest of the city in 1535, a victory of considerably greater propagandist than military significance.[16] Its demonstration of the Emperor's prowess in holy war was the literal enactment of the symbolic victory of Fides over Mahomet at the centre of the 'Fides' tapestry, and the popularisation of his victory in numerous forms was intended to stir the hearts of the faithful, many of whom would have been familiar with the Foy/Mahomet opposition from their devotional primers.

Charles V's dedication to scourging the infidel was emulated by princes across Christendom, if often only iconographically, and the primary meaning behind such images seems to have been instantly recognisable. Yet they could be interpreted in very different ways in differing contexts. The Tunis tapestries were first exhibited in England at the wedding of Mary I to the Emperor's son, Philip II of Spain, in the same year as their completion. The bold and graphic depiction of infidel defeat displayed at Winchester to accompany the marriage affirmed Charles's divine mission to destroy the twin threats of the Ottoman Turk and Protestant heresy. Again, as Brotton and Jardine have noted, in the context of 'this particularly tense political union, Turk was conflated with Protestant, the former symbolically crushed under the horses of Hapsburg military power, the latter threatened with the same fate if it continued on its path of 'heresy'.[17] The emergence of a Reformation discourse of equivalence – polemically binding Protestant and Muslim, and Catholic and Muslim – shifts the parameters in which Mahomet had hitherto been contained, recasting concepts of Christian identity, but the impact of England's break with Rome and subsequent religious change can perhaps be best understood

when its impact upon the shifting iconographic opposition of Faith and Mahomet is closely followed.

Mahomet appears in this sequence at a time when devotional imagery, though widely circumscribed, retained an important role in the early Elizabethan church. Printed primers like those created by Philippe Pigouchet for Simon Vostre at the turn of the century were not simply abandoned (many may still have remained treasured possessions), but were refigured for a Protestant context in ways that offered clear continuities with the past while introducing reformed ideas that included attitudes to Mahomet and Mahometanism. One such example is John Daye's finely illustrated 'Queen's Prayerbook' of 1569, revised and expanded by his son Richard Daye into *A Booke of Christian Prayers collected out of the auncient writers, and best learned in oure tyme* (1578). These illustrations corresponded in many ways with those primers that had gone before. As Duffy points out, Daye was the printer of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, and despite the incorporation of a pre-Reformation illustrative scheme, 'there is no doubting the firm Protestantism of these collections of prayers, which were themselves based on an earlier compilation by the Protestant devotional writer Henry Bull. The book includes material by [John] Bradford, and from the liturgical writings of Calvin and Knox.'[18] Although carefully altered, like the earlier Sarum primers, Daye's text features a marginal sequence of female virtues triumphing over male vices (again with the whole scheme reproduced twice in the text) almost certainly drawn, like the images in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, by a continental engraver – and, like the primers, the opening image of the set features the crushing of Mahomet (Figures 14 and 15).

Alongside an obvious debt to the virtue/vice tradition, the appearance of Mahomet marks some notable deviations from the earlier model so prominently celebrated in the *Los Honores* tapestry. Firstly, the sequence itself has been carefully Protestantised. Consisting now (besides the image of Mahomet) of Hope/Judas, Love/Herod, Wisdom/Sardanapalus, Justice/Tyranny, Strength/Holofernes against Measure/Excess, Love of God/Idolatry, Patience/Wrath and Humility/Pride, the vices have become less specific, with only Mahomet, Herod, Judas, Sardanapalus and Holofernes remaining as familiar individuals, and Idolatry brought back into the sequence, conspicuously augmented with symbols of papist excess. Instead of Faith, the female figure standing over Mahomet is a personification of 'Knowledge of God in Iesus Christ is life', responding to new Protestant emphases. Beneath the prone prophet a reader is instructed: 'Mahomet and his Alcoron is perdition'. The detailing of the

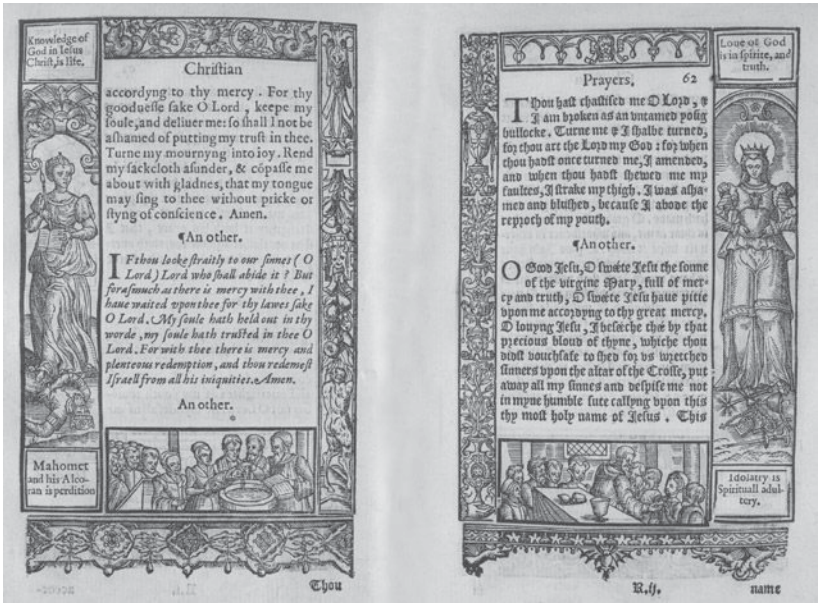


Figure 14. 'Knowledge of God in Iesus Christ is life' standing upon 'Mahomet and his Alcoron is perdition'. Richard Daye, *A booke of Christian prayers, collected out of the auncie[n]t writers, and best learned in our tyme* (London: John Daye, dwellyng ouer Aldersgate, 1578) p. 41. © The British Library Board, C.65.1.2.

figures is also markedly different. Throughout Daye's sequence the standing female virtues are returned to their classicised forms, and 'Knowledge of God in Iesus Christ' holds a taper (signifying the light of faith) and a text, presumably a sacred text – making her very different from the nun-like figure of Faith and her attendant symbols in the earlier examples. The taper and the book are taken from earlier images of Prudence, and, as Leslie Mahin Oliver has noted, 'often in early Reformation art the open book in a woman's hand is the symbol of the lay possession of the Scriptures'.[19] This image asserts emphatically that Mahomet and his text will be defeated by the power of holy scripture and the knowledge of Christ it brings to all.

The luxury of Mahomet's dress has more in common with the *Los Honores* 'Machvmetvs' than the nondescript figure of the primers, but instead of a turban he wears a crown, and a bracelet around his right wrist. No other early printed image shows him crowned, and of the other vices in this sequence only Tyranny wears a crown, drawing attention to



Figure 15. Detail from the left of Figure 14. Richard Daye, *A booke of Christian prayers, collected out of the auncie[n]t writers, and best learned in our tyme* (London: John Daye, dwellyng ouer Aldersgate, 1578) p. 41. © The British Library Board, C.65.1.2.

Mahomet's status as a proud earthly ruler and, once again, to his very corporeality. He is denied divinity. Furthermore, his prostrate posture – quite distinct from the depiction in either the earlier primers or in the *Los Honores* tapestry – may even suggest that he is dead, utterly defeated by Protestant theology. Here is a reformed Mahomet, used as part of a modified iconographic programme that was 'a conscious attempt to appeal to a constituency which valued and was still using that older devotional tradition'. It was, furthermore, 'designed to wean such traditionalists to a more wholesome Protestant […] diet'.[20] Mahomet's defeat becomes a lesson in the nature of faith and an enabling connection to an earlier representational system.

A curious legacy in print was to follow for this image of Mahomet in defeat. The blocks used for at least some of the virtue/vice sequence turned up some years after the publication of Daye's 1578 prayerbook in Edinburgh, and were used to decorate Théodore de Bèze's *Propositions and Principles of Divinitie* (1591), as well as James VI's *Poeticall Exercises*

of 1591 and his *Basilikon Doron* of 1599. Although he features prominently, Mahomet is no longer identified as the prone figure, and the image is here titled simply 'Veritas' – truth triumphing over falsehood. It appeared again, untitled, in the Cambridge editions of William Whitaker's *Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura* (1588) and Giles Fletcher the Elder's *Licia, or Poems of Love* (1593).[21] Exactly how they were moved from London to Edinburgh and Cambridge has been explored by Leslie Mahin Oliver, who speculates that they were stolen from Daye soon after 1578 and thereafter copied, before falling into the hands of the Puritan printer Robert Waldegrave who took them to Edinburgh, where he is recorded in 1590, and who is best known for producing James IV's major works. They seem, by the early 1630s, to have arrived back in England, perhaps carried by Waldegrave as he followed King James to London.[22]

The removal of any direct identification of the figure of Mahomet from the image in these later reproductions suggests that either the opposition was so well known that such an explanation was superfluous, or that his precise identification was less important than the female personification of religious faith triumphing over a tyrannous and false adversary. Certainly Mahomet's clothing in Daye's image features none of the standard signifiers of Mahometanism – a turban, long ornate robes, perhaps also a sword – common in this later period, and although the Alcoran is referenced, it does not feature. Without the accompanying text, this figure could be, and perhaps was intended to be, anyone.

There is no question of anonymity in the final image of this brief history. In an inventory of the textiles kept in the Best Bed Chamber at Hardwick Hall, made in 1601, the following are identified:

> Seaven peeces of hanginges of imbrioderie of Cloth of golde and silver, cloth of tyssue, velvett of sondry Coulors, and nedleworke twelve foote deepe, one peece of the picture of fayth and his contrarie Mahomet, an other peece with the picture of hope and the contrary Judas, an other peece with the picture of temperaunce and the contrary Sardanapales, the other fowre peeces paned and wrought with flowers and slips of nedlework.[23]

The familiar pattern of virtues opposed to vices appears again, but – like the *Los Honores* tapestry – in a prestigious location and on a grand scale, here as part of the celebrated collection amassed by Bess of Hardwick. The 'peece of the picture of fayth and his contrarie Mahomet' is still extant, a striking and considerable wall-hanging that is a development of the tradition I have been outlining, but diverging from it in important respects (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Appliqué wall-hanging depicting Faith and Mahomet (c. 1580). Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire. By permission of The National Trust.

In this image Fides is recognisably contemporary, with the dress and accoutrements of an Elizabethan noblewoman – perhaps even Bess herself, who may have presided over its creation. In her left hand she proffers the cup of faith; in her right she clasps a text marked 'Faith' along its edge. Immediately to her right stands a crucifix, and the inset background appears to indicate ecclesiastical architecture. Rather than lying prone, crushed beneath her, the figure of Mahomet cowers in submission, his book (marked 'Acaron') cast down in front of him. He too wears what appears to be contemporary clothing; he is (as in all the images) bearded, and he wears an elaborately folded turban. Behind him a further image depicts a group of figures before what may be a mosque, or perhaps the Ottoman Sultan standing at the entrance to his palace. Mahomet (and thus Mahometanism) is prostrate before Elizabethan religious truth, yet she offers the salvation of faith, a particularly apt feature, given that England entered into an elaborate association with the Ottoman Empire in the same year this embroidery was created – 1580 – subsequently

justified by many as the means by which the Queen might 'work the Turkes conversion'.[24]

Of the other 'peeces' identified in the 1601 inventory, the indication that Sardanapalus was opposed to Temperance indicates different source material from either the Sarum primer or Daye's prayerbook, given that these oppose Sardanapalus to Prudence and Wisdom, respectively. Anthony Wells-Cole has identified the source of the Hardwick sequence to a rare series of prints of the virtues engraved by Hans Collaert, 'perhaps after designs by Crispijn van der Broeck' in 1576.[25] However, the embroiderer(s) of the Hardwick piece made some telling alterations from Collaert's earlier image, particularly in the portrayal of Faith. In the van der Broeck image sequence she is a classical seated figure holding only the cup of faith, her bare foot extended over the Alcoran. The background has also been deliberately changed from a classicised depiction of idolatry in the original, recognisably based on a template found in numerous medieval manuscripts. This change seems intended to acknowledge Mahometan monotheism, increasingly dominant in later Christian accounts.[26] Wells-Cole is therefore right to suggest that 'more than one set of prints … lie behind these marvellous embroideries', and it seems probable that one source was the equivalent image in John Daye's *A Booke of Christian Prayers*.[27] The Hardwick image has certainly been 'Protestantised' in the same way: she stands, holding a text of holy scripture in her right hand, as in Daye, and with the other holds a symbol of faith. The primacy of holy texts to both Protestantism and Mahometanism is also emphasised, the contest between them taking place on both a physical and scriptural level. The two do correspond, and it is hard to imagine that a text as widely circulated as Daye's officially sanctioned prayerbook would not have been familiar to the communities surrounding the great houses at Hardwick or Chatsworth, where Bess had previously been based.[28]

Regardless of the exact details of its provenance, the Hardwick embroidery offers yet another permutation of the long-established sequence of virtues and vices, and specifically of the opposition between Faith and Mahomet. The importance of this tradition as it has been traced here lies as much in its continuities as in its disjunctions. As one might expect, Faith is figured in an entirely different fashion after England's break with Rome and the Elizabethan settlement than before, in accordance with a Protestant emphasis upon the primacy of scripture, the individual's encounter with God, and an abhorrence of 'papist' idolatry. Just as the basic format of the early Tudor primers was retained to offer devotional continuity, so the figure of Mahomet remains consistently prostrate before

Christian truth, absolutely opposed to it. The early forms in which Faith appears in these didactic decorative schemes utilise a series of familiar signs to identify the church to her believers, and that church is defined by its implacable opposition to – and inevitable victory over – the forces of the 'infidel' as embodied in Mahomet. The later images develop a familiar symbolic system to reconfigure faith for an English Protestant constituency, in the process polemically simplifying complex confessional divisions. And yet the subjection of Mahomet remains – a reassuring assertion of a key Christian truth, a point around which Christian identity pivots. These images confirm a way of thinking about faith and its antithesis that – while invariably complicated – remained valid in England throughout the sixteenth century.

1. PREACHING EQUIVALENCE

There was no definitive break with the past, but many cherished certainties did become unfixed in the upheavals of the Reformation, not least previous assumptions about the papacy and Mahometanism. As with the vice/virtue oppositions, changing attitudes were often expressed in terms of the familiar female personification of faith and church threatened by either the papacy or Mahomet. Long after Henry VIII's break with Rome, on Tuesday of Easter week in 1570, Thomas Drant, archdeacon of Lewes, climbed up to the pulpit to preach to the congregation of St Mary's Spittle in northeast London. Taking as his theme the lyrical and controversial Song of Solomon, and specifically the lines 'Fayrest of all women, whether is thy Beloued gone? whether is he gone aside? tell vs, and we will seek him with thee. My beloued is gone down into his garden, to the beds of his spicerie, to be fed in gardens, & gather vp Lilies' (Song of Solomon 6:1–2), Drant proceeded to imagine the world's churches personified as women.[29] He began:

> The Church of the beloued is fayre and fayrest of all women. Idolatrous Churches are foule and euill fauored women: and of all foule and euill fauored, I thinke the Church of *Rome* to be one of the foulest of women. The euill fauorednesse of *Mahomets* woma[n] or Church is in this euill fauored *Romishe* woman. That euill fauored Mahomets woman or Church, defendeth many wiues: This Romishe Church defendeth stewes, and strompets, curtizans, concubines, and boy harlots. Mahomets woman dreameth heauen to be a place goodly of riuers, pleasaunt Apples, young delicate women, and faire fruites: The Popes woman doth say and hold, that *S. Dorathey* made baskets of Apples that came downe from heauen. Mahomets woman defendeth workes: The Popes woman defendeth workes.[30]

To further affirm his point, in the margin is printed: 'Mahomets & the Popes churches foule alike.' The terms in which the church of the beloved is defined and its enemies demonised are so different from those used in the early printed accounts that it is clear a tectonic shift has taken place. Ongoing schism in the Christian church fundamentally remapped the spiritual landscape for the English, with only a few fixed points remaining. One of these, indicated in the continuing relevance of the vice/virtue sequence, appears to have been Mahomet. Strategies through which opposing claims to theological truth could be discredited also remain valid, a point Drant demonstrates by using accusations conventionally levelled at Mahomet and his infidel church to attack Rome and the papacy. Of these strategies, Drant foregrounds Mahomet's creation of a carnal paradise to allure believers, here linked to the papacy's justification of a cult of saints, in which St Dorothy 'made baskets of Apples that came downe from heauen' (a reference to the fulfilment of the virgin martyr St Dorothy's promise to send apples and roses from heaven after being put to death for refusing to worship idols).[31] It is a measure of quite how 'foule' the church of Rome had become that it can be considered equivalent – if not worse – than the church of Mahomet. Indeed Mahomet's church can, it seems, be contained within this 'euill fauoured *Romishe* woman', as if Mahometanism had emerged out of Catholicism as a specifically Catholic heresy.

I have suggested that in these Reformation disputes Mahomet and Mahometanism remained static markers of infidelity used by all sides to indicate the scale of their opponents' deviation from the 'true church'.[32] But as this extract indicates, that does not always seem to have been the case. Accusations are made here against Mahomet's church that simply could not have been made in England before the 1530s. Long before Higden, Lydgate and Mandeville focussed upon the heresiarch alternative, idolatry had been a component of the Christian demonisation of Mahomet. The new and lurid connection between Mahomet's justification of 'many wiues' and a papal predilection for 'stewes, and strompets, curtizans, concubines, and boy harlots' is, however, generated by Reformation polemic, as is their apparently equivalent defence of earthly 'workes' assisting an individual's entry into heaven. This last assertion is particularly striking, given that it became relevant only in the wake of deep-rooted Protestant opposition to the notion of 'good works' procuring a place at Christ's right hand. In this way, attitudes towards Mahomet and Mahometanism became polemically malleable in response to the shifting terms of religious disputation, and consequently the life of Mahomet was read and

reproduced with new emphases. Drant goes on: the Alcoran asserts the existence of purgatory, as does 'the Popes woman'. Both Mahomet and the pope curse those who 'thinke not of Christ' as they do. Neither permit doctrinal dispute of any kind; both 'practiseth a sale of heauen'. Finally, and most damningly, Mahomet claims 'he is bigger then all the kinges in the world' (reflected in the crown he wears in Daye's prayerbook image). This misplaced pride in earthly dominion is mirrored in the pope, who claims to be 'lorde of lordes, and king of kinges'.[33]

Thomas Drant's provocative and polemical imposition of equivalence between the churches of Rome and of Mahomet was by no means out of place in the public sermonising and religious writing that appeared that same year – 1570 – as well as later in the decade. It was typical: debating the theological proximity of Mahomet and the Papacy appears influentially in John Bale's *The image of both Churches* of 1570, in a guide to the use of epistles in Sunday church services by David Chytraeus in the same year, and is also used by William Fulke in a Hampton Court sermon, again in 1570. Each lament, and attempt to historicise, the current spread of religious error and ignorance across the world. John Bale considers Mahometanism and the papacy to be the manifestation of Gog and Magog, while Chytraeus reminds his readers that they should take care 'not too let slip the occasion of atteyning eternall saluation by the Gospell', a necessity made all the more urgent because now 'the wickednesse and vnthankfulnesse of men is punished with the blindnesse and outrages of Mahomet & the Pope.'[34]

In his treatment of Mahomet, Fulke, in contrast, devotes his exegetical energies to Revelation, and the well-worn issue of Antichrist. Because Paul had written that the Antichrist 'shal syt in the temple of God', he can be no heathen emperor. Likewise, 'it is manifest, that *Mahomet* is not that especial Antichrist, because he sitteth without the temple of God, as ther be diuers that wold haue these things to be vnderstood of *Mahomet* or Ottomanus'. The Pope, however, sits 'in the midst of the temple of God, & boasteth him self to be God'. Is it clear then – to William Fulke at least – that 'Rome is the See of Antichrist.'[35] That 'diuers' people were arguing that either Mahomet or the Ottoman Sultan was the Antichrist is intriguing: Fulke is intervening in a debate that was already underway. John Northbrooke, for instance, writing in confessional form the following year, was less sure – there could be no doubt that Antichrist was already in the world, but where? For 'what worse Antichrist can we haue, than either *Mahomet* is, or the Pope of Rome, whiche is yet a thousande tymes worse then *Mahomet* is?'[36]

Identifying Mahomet as the Antichrist was not new, as Eulogius's ninth-century Cordovan *Liber apologeticus martyrum* demonstrates.[37] In the wake of England's break with Rome, escalating enmity towards Spain, and against an increasingly apocalyptic backdrop, such debates gained a renewed force. Who was Antichrist? How might he be identified? What was the greatest threat to the souls of the godly – Mahometanism, enemy for centuries, or the newly revealed evil of Roman Catholicism? Again, such questions led scholars, theologians and readers back to the available sources. Addressing this very issue in a sermon at Lincoln in August 1575, the teacher and reformer Archbishop Thomas Cooper pointed to the suggestive simultaneity of Mahomet and the papacy – 'for Mahomet in *Arabia*, and the Pope in *Rome* beganne their vsurpation within twelue yeres together'.[38]

Links between Mahomet and the papacy were considered further by Archbishop Edwin Sandys in a sermon at Paul's Cross:

> Againe there hath beene in a manner a generall falling from the Catholike faith: as the Apostle long before foretolde vs: some vnto Mahomet, some vnto Antichrist his brother. Euen about one time Mahomet appeared, and the Pope swarued from true faith of Christ, the one renouncing him in name the other in deede, the one quite blotting out the mention of Christ and denying at all to professe him in woorde. The other keeping his name but robbing him of his office and shutting him out of his right place; both falling from the faith.[39]

The contributions made by Cooper and Sandys (both senior figures in the Elizabethan religious settlement) to this debate use the rough chronological connection between the rise of Mahomet and the papacy to affirm a more complex interrelationship of the two within God's greater plan, as revealed in scripture. This was an elaboration and extension of earlier strategies to connect Mahomet to the number 666, either by re-establishing his date of birth to that year or by the numerological analysis of his name, thus affirming him to be the beast of Revelation.[40] Rather than equivalent enemies of the faith, Mahomet and the papacy have become counterparts: the pope as the Antichrist and Mahomet as his brother, one defying Christ in word, the other in deed. Both, Sandys is prepared to acknowledge, were once members of the 'Catholike faith', both are now fallen from that faith – a provocative assertion that, instead of the dominant Higden/Mandeville narrative (which asserted Mahomet's idolatrous past), draws upon the tradition presented by Langland in *Piers Plowman*: that Mahomet had been a Christian man, and might even have 'ben a pope', before he 'in mysbileve men and wommen brought'.[41]

Sandys's rather vague identification of the pope with the prophet complicates (while also affirming) William Fulke's conviction that the papacy had to be the Antichrist. Fulke was to elaborate this point in an anti-papal treatise of 1577. There he writes:

> But when *Mahomet*, in the East, & Antichrist the Pope, in the West, seduced the world with most detestable heresie, then was fulfilled that which was reuealed to *S. John* in the 12. of the *Apocalyps*, *the woman clothed with the Sonne*, which you your self confesse to be the Church, *was so persecuted by the Dragon, that she fled into the wildernes, there to remain a long season*. Where she hath not decayed, but ben always preserued, vntil God should reueale Antichrist, and bring her againe into open light, which (his holy name be praysed) is now brought to passe in our dayes, to our inestimable comfort, and his euerlasting glory.[42]

Harking back to the heretical focus of the dominant early printed lives, here the papacy and Mahomet are equally placed as seducers of the world. Fulke binds them into a complex vision of antichristian symbiosis – the true church was driven into the wilderness by Mahometan aggression, and was replaced by the papacy. Only now, once the latter has been revealed to be Antichrist, can the true church be brought into 'the open light': hence the emergence of Protestantism. This was an influential teleology and became the major Protestant narrative, explaining and identifying the Antichrist and reassuring believers of the truth of their faith. Repositioning Mahomet at a momentous juncture in a Christian past also recognised his new centrality to Protestant conceptions of history and identity (it also neatly counteracted the opposing alignment of the Reformation with renewed Ottoman advances into Christendom).

Questioning the parts played by Mahomet and the papacy in God's plan did not simply appear from nowhere. These were issues that had been raised in different forms and in different contexts as early as the tenth century, and in many respects this kind of equivalence was the elaboration and magnification of polemical points of contention that had emerged in the print debates of the 1530s – hence the engagement of some eminent religious figures. John Foxe, for instance, engaged with the debate when, in the *Acts and Monuments* (1570), he embarked on a lengthy and inconclusive discussion of whether the 'Turke' or the papacy was Antichrist, to which some of these sermons and pamphlets probably responded. There was also the pressure of accelerating hostility, both domestic and international, between Protestant and Roman Catholic – not least Pope Pius V's bull *Regnans in Excelsis* which excommunicated Elizabeth I and was issued in 1570.[43] The virulent attacks on the papacy and the pursuit of a

polarising agenda of equivalence that repositioned Mahomet are responses to this papal pronouncement and the climate it engendered.

The polemical religious literature of the late sixteenth century was clearly a product of Reformation, yet equivalence between the papacy and Mahomet did not originate with England's break from Rome. Around 1378, John Wycliffe, in affirming the primacy of scripture, had argued that Mahomet had polluted the Bible for his own carnal and self-aggrandising purposes, and consequently referred to the papacy (and to Ockham's disciples) as 'Western Mahomets' who had done the same.[44] Reformation meant that these associations acquired a strikingly new and popular vitality. At the beginnings of the Reformation debate in England – largely conducted in print and in the vernacular – Mahomet played a pivotal role as a common measure of infidelity, and thus as a means of defining true faith. The images of Mahomet being crushed by faith demonstrate that he was invariably invoked when such definitions were deemed necessary. So Thomas More, writing against Luther, Tyndale and Rycke in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), expected his readers to be familiar with the prophet and Christian traditions concerning his life. Attempting to explain the pernicious dangers of Lutheranism, he wrote that just 'as Machomete dyd before', Luther 'doth nowe'. Both false prophets, they 'brynge up oppynyons pleasaunt to the peple / geuynge theym lybertye to lewdnes'.[45] In the same way that Thomas Drant, forty years later, linked the carnal pleasures apparently promised in Mahomet's heaven to alleged papal proclivities for fleshly joys, here Mahomet's cynical promise of anything and everything to allure followers is the model for similar Protestant promises. More draws specific attention to the reformers' enthusiasm for the 'takyng of wyues' by the clergy, which he considered another indulgence of ungodly and antichristian carnal appetites.[46] It also allied the Protestant cause directly with Mahomet, whom – it was well known – had taken many wives himself.

In response to More, William Tyndale's *An Answere vnto Thomas Mores Dialogue* (1531) countered with a different and particularly influential accusation. More had derided the reformers as a 'scattered company' and insisted upon the maintenance of the traditions of the universal church, traditions which gained their authority and veracity from the huge numbers who daily observed them and the centuries over which they had been practiced, largely unchanged. More demanded to know how Luther and his followers could be right and this vast body of Catholic believers, as well as the holy institutions of the church itself, be wrong. Tyndale turned to Mahomet, replying that 'if the multitude of mans witness make aught

true, then were the doctrine of Mahomet truer than Christ'.[47] Everyone knew that Mahomet's 'law' held sway over huge tracts of the world, and More's reasoning, argued Tyndale, logically meant asserting the truth of Mahomet – clearly an unpalatable proposition.[48]

In the disputations surrounding the schism Mahomet is simply an emblem of infidelity whose popular profile made him ideal for such treatment. Tyndale could refer to Mahomet's 'feigned miracles' secure in the knowledge that his readers knew their character and purpose. Similarly, More – pursuing his earlier rationale – could explain that Tyndale's commitment to 'a secrete scatered company unknown' instead of the 'trewe catholyke chyrche of criste' was equivalent to the 'Turk's' worship of 'the false deceyuer Machamet' instead of 'the trewe sauyor of the worlde' and assume his readers recognised and understood Mahomet's position as an inversion of Christ. In his later *Practise of Prelates* (1548), Tyndale turned in a different direction – to history – to associate Mahometanism and the Catholic church. Following its successful beginnings in Arabia, the 'sect' of Mahomet, based upon its founder's 'wiles and fayned miracles', attacked 'the empyre of Rome in those quarters' of the world. As the Emperor honourably attempted to defend Christendom against them, the Pope and his bishops ('who preach all of non other God than the Pope') simultaneously invaded the Emperor's dominions.[49] Pope and 'Turk', Roman Catholicism and Mahometanism, once again offered equivalent threats to the true church.

For the reformers, one text above all became an influential source of information from its controversial first appearance in Basle in 1543 – Theodore Bibliander's printed edition of Robert of Ketton's twelfth-century *Lex Mahumet Pseudoprophet*. Although ostensibly a reproduction of the Qur'ān and not focussed specifically on the figure of Mahomet, the very title of Bibliander's *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina ac ipse Alcoran* indicates the irrevocable and polemically necessary Christian association between prophet and text. The genesis and publication of this volume, and the complexity of its composition, have been skilfully detailed and analysed elsewhere, particularly by Harry Clark, Katya Vehlow, Hartmut Bobzin and Thomas E. Burman.[50] That Bibliander's *Alcoran* became an established and sought-after authority in England is suggested by the number of copies extant in the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as in a number of cathedral libraries. Furthermore, as Thomas Freeman has recently demonstrated, John Foxe used it as a primary source for the 'Turkish digression' in his *Acts and Monuments*, and via Foxe it passed into mainstream polemical culture,

through the anti-papal sermons of Drant and others in the crisis of the 1570s.[51]

In many respects Bibliander's *Alcoran* offered little about Mahomet that was new. It was a compendium of 'the original anthology that Peter the Venerable had commissioned four hundred years previously', including amongst other authorities Riccoldo da Montecroce, alongside 'a series of further (and in some cases excerpted) polemical, apologetic, and historical treatises that had been written in the centuries since'.[52] A substantial proportion of this additional material was intended to resituate the translation in terms of the apparently inexorable rise of the Ottoman 'Turk', and in the process affirm the standard Christian life of the Prophet. The ways in which copies of this text have been annotated by their readers suggests that these specific sections were read particularly closely because they are often marked more densely than the Qur'ānic text itself.[53]

The figure of Mahomet remains the polemical target in much of this paratextual literature. Bibliander's own humanistic focus upon Biblical comparison and the contextualisation of this edition in terms of current Catholic and radical Protestant heresies (as Alexander Ross would do for the first English translation of 1649) leads invariably back to Mahomet. Thus Bibliander's careful and copious marginal notation draws a reader's attention to Mahomet's 'fables' – echoing Montecroce – his lack of authentic miracles and his supposed cynical synthesis of pre-existing Christian and Jewish scripture.[54] Amongst the prefatory material, many copies of the 1543 edition featured the 'In Alcoranum Praefatio' contributed by Martin Luther, who had intervened with the reluctant Basle authorities to ensure the book would be printed. It too draws the reader back to Mahomet. In his preface to the *Libellus de Ritu et Moribus Turcorum* of 1530, Luther had, besides lamenting the impossibility of procuring a copy of the Alcoran, described Mahomet as an 'abominable prophet', one who (and here he echoes the epistolary injunctions of St. Paul)

> denies that Christ is the son of God, denies that he died for our sins, denies that he arose for our life, denies that by faith in him our sins are forgiven and we are justified, denies that he will come as judge of the living and the dead (though he does believe in the resurrection of the dead and the day of judgement), denies the Holy Spirit, and denies the gifts of the Spirit.[55]

Aside from two notable caveats, Mahomet is made anathema to the central tenets of the Protestant faith. Luther later places these concerns in a contemporary context in his preface to Bibliander's *Alcoran*, arguing for an unmediated account of Mahomet's 'lawe' to be available to

the public. Why should a public readership be afraid of Mahomet and Mahometanism? After all, 'In this age of ours how many varied enemies have we already seen? Papist defenders of idolatry, the Jews, the multifarious monstrosities of the Anabaptists, Servetus, and others. Let us now prepare ourselves against Muhammad.'[56] Once more echoing Pauline injunctions to the faithful, Luther denies any gradation of difference here – whether ostensibly Christian or Mahometan, all enemies of the faith are equivalent, and the contemporary Ottoman threat is focussed solely upon the figure of Mahomet.

Linking Mahomet and the pope, displayed in the public sermons and religious tracts of the 1570s and galvanised by the excommunication of Elizabeth I, thus originates in Reformation polemic. Luther and other eminent reformers drew upon an already well-established scriptural language of identification and differentiation, applying it to Roman Catholicism and the papacy alongside Mahometanism and Mahomet, mapping one onto the other. It was as a result of the exegetical energies of these reformers that this process was fully realised, and in texts rapidly translated into English – most notably Theodore Bibliander's *A godly consultation vnto the brethren and companions of the Christen religyon* (1542) and Henrich Bullinger's *Commentary upon the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians* (1538).

Both Bibliander and Bullinger are preoccupied with Antichrist, but the latter provides the model for Fulke, Northbrooke and Foxe later in the century. Bullinger presents the dominant life of Mahomet, using it to identify the prophet and his 'lawe' with Daniel's millenarian 'lytle horne'. After all, he argues, Mahomet's rise from a lowly birth to the present state in which his successors have conquered 'the mooste myghtyest kyngdomes of the world, Persia, Siria, and Egypte' surely makes him a likely candidate in the search for Antichrist.[57] Furthermore, 'he hath inuaded, beaten downe & spoyled more kyngdomes, then euer any myghty prynce, or cruell tyraunte had done before hym', and as the 'syncke of all mischefe', Mahomet had precipitated 'the greatest destruccio[n] of mankind' since he had 'troden down the lawe of God and had publyshed hys owne'.[58] In short, 'all the lyfe and doctryne, all the lawes, institucions and dedes of Mahomet are agaynste Christe', and consequently there can be no doubt that Antichrist – 'thys chylde of perdicion and synfull man' is 'the kyngdom of Machomet'.[59]

Or perhaps there could be. Bullinger is careful to point out (as Foxe would do in 1570) that 'whyle these thynges were in hand in ye East partyes, ye Byshop of Rome goeth aboute ye dominyo[n] of ye West

partyes' – again a familiar formula for later English writers. Bullinger explores at considerable historical and exegetical length the most likely candidate for Antichrist, perhaps unsurprisingly moving towards an interconnection between the two that ultimately appears to favour the papacy as the 'lytle horne'. Even though Mahomet was the traditional candidate, 'neither is the seate of Rome ony thynge behynde hym in myschefe or wyckednes'.[60]

Bibliander, whose *A godly consultation* appeared in English the year before the publication of his edition of the *Alcoran* (it was originally published in Basle as *Ad nominis Christiani socios consultatio* in the same year) and should be considered part of the same refutational project, adopts a very different strategy to Bullinger when detailing the 'supersticions of Machumet'.[61] Thomas Burman has identified a tension in Bibliander's *Alcoran* that he finds in different forms in other Christian editions: the compiler 'shows an interest in the whole of the Qur'ānic text that in some ways seems at odds with the obvious polemical preoccupations of his edition'.[62] Bibliander's *godly consultation* displays a similarly intensive and detailed interest. Although he is careful to justify his work on the grounds of 'moste greate necessite' – presumably as a response to the pressing problem of Ottoman advances into eastern Europe – he is also candid and explicit in his recognition of the temptations of Mahometanism.[63] There are, he writes, 'certe[n] thinges contayned therin so like and agreeable to the lawe of Moses and doctryne of the gospell / that a man wolde suppose at the fyrste syght that [it] had bene deryued oute of the fountayne of celestyall oracles to teache men wisdome and to make them blessed'.[64]

The celebrated ambivalence – some would argue tolerance – of Mandeville's *Travels* stems from a willingness to acknowledge those attributes shared by Christianity and Mahometanism. Mandeville and others regularly assert Mahometan veneration for Christ, for instance, in order to affirm Christian truth. Bibliander goes further than these earlier models, with an extraordinary passage in this vein:

> For Mahumet cryeth oute of the Jues infidelete / and he contendeth that Christe was conceyued of the holy goste and borne of Marye a pure virgyn. And he calleth hym the greate Prophete of God and the worde and sowle and spirite of God / whiche shall come to iudge the whole worlde. Nether wolde Mahumeth seme at any hande to be Christes enemye or that he wolde abolyshe his doctrine. But onely to take vpon hym to correcte those thinges that were depraued and thruste in craftely of other men. Also Machumetes doctryne doth valiently resiste certen oulde heresyes condemned by the worde of god and iudgeme[n]t of the catholike churche as of the Anthropamorphites / which helde opinion that god was

compacte and had soche another bodye and members as a man. In conclusio[n] he cutteth the throte asondre of the heathen superstition vtterly denyinge the pluralite of godes. Neyther will he grante any vse of Images in any maner of wyse to stande with religio[n].[65]

Aside from his use of the word 'seme' here ('Nether wolde Mahumeth seme'), Bibliander presents Mahomet in an intriguing light, in agreement with central Christian tenets, set against heretical superstition and idolatry. The notion of a reforming prophet corresponds to some of the very earliest recorded Christian views of Mahometan 'doctrine': that, as Robert G. Hoyland has noted, Mahomet was thought to have led his followers 'to the first rung of the monotheist ladder', becoming characterised as 'a revivalist who reacquainted the Arabs with the one God, from whose service they had lapsed'.[66] By the same token, Bibliander also (perhaps controversially) portrays a reforming prophet, one in a Protestant mould: a prophet who is the word, the soul and the spirit of God and no enemy to Christ.

Bibliander's Mahomet corrects rather than perverts scripture, removing those elements that might be considered 'depraued' and 'thruste in craftely'. This was the basic Protestant humanist project: to return through textual scholarship to the most authentic Biblical text available. Bibliander presents Mahomet in this way because the material he used in the compilation of his *Alcoran* – and the Qur'ānic text itself – emphatically confirmed the prophet's anti-idolatrous credentials. Yet contemporary religious politics also influence his characterisation. It was widely reported by Catholic polemicists that Luther and his followers sought to let the Ottomans 'wynne all' rather than submit to papal authority, even that Protestants in both the Low Countries and in the German states actively favoured the turban over the papal tiara (and in some respects these accusations were true).[67] The suggestion that Mahomet was a proto-Protestant was thus a difficult one for the reformers. It might offer a polemical advantage – as with earlier assertions of his monotheism and reverence for Christ, it affirmed Christian truth – but it was a double-edged sword, potentially giving ammunition to those alleging Protestant/Mahometan equivalence, even complicity.

Bibliander wrestles with this dilemma in less than emphatic style. He attempts to portray Mahomet as a kind of reformer, thus justifying Protestant doctrine as true and rational, while simultaneously affirming that Protestantism and Mahometanism are totally distinct. The result is a deeply ambivalent portrayal. Inevitably, his rejection of Mahomet returns the reader to Christ in a strategy familiar from earlier lives:

Christianity remains the natural and underlying truth. Despite the fact that Mahometans live lives that 'apere to be most holy', their 'doctrine'

> doth not holde Christ for the heade in whome onely the buyldynge of the house and people of god is ioyntelye knyte to gether. And for as moche as it layeth not the reasons or effectes of religion and true beatitude vpon the foundatio[n] of the prophetes and Apostles it is a pla[n]tatio[n] not whiche the celestiall father hathe planted. But an erthely or rather a diuylyshe plantation whiche the lorde Iesus in a tyme appoynted shall plucke vp by the rootes with the spirite of his mouthe.[68]

This notion of Mahometanism as an earthly or devilish 'plantation' – as (like papistry) a dangerous and unsubstantiated innovation – informs later reformist debates. One of the most influential figures for English writers and preachers in the late sixteenth century was Jean Calvin, who wrote extensively on the twin subjects of religious innovation and Roman Catholic/Mahometan equivalence. In his *A harmonie vpon the three Euangelists* (published in English in 1584), Calvin rhetorically asked, 'fro[m] whence came the religion of the Pope & Mahomet, saue onely from wicked additions whereby they feigned themselues to full vppe the doctrine of the Gospel?'[69] This is once more a Protestant humanist strategy, focussing specifically on the primacy and perfection of scripture and (unlike Bibliander) associating papal and Mahometan innovation with wickedness. There can be no further revelation, Calvin later argues, and scripture is the only true authority. Once more equivalence is asserted in opposition – 'Mahomet and the Pope haue a common principle of religion', he points out; that 'the perfection of doctrine is not contained in the scripture, but that there is a certaine higher thing reuealed by the spirit'.[70] Both are consequently Antichrists; both commit 'sacrileges' against true religion.

Another Protestant authority, John Knox, was similarly forthright in his appraisal of papist and Mahometan innovation, although he offered another variation on their interconnection. Knox's reading led him to discourse upon Mahomet's supposed pronouncement 'that no man should in paine of death dispute or reason of the grounde of his religion'.[71] This law, 'by the arte of Sata[n] is yet obserued amo[n]gest the Turkes to theyr mortal blindnes and horrible blasphemyng of Christ Iesus, and of his true religion'. It is from Mahomet – and through him from Satan – that 'the Pope and his rabble' learnt the same lesson.[72] For Knox, the conclusion is clear: 'that whensoeuer the papisticall religion shall come to examination, it shalbe found to haue no other grounde, then hath the religion of Mahomet. To witt mannes inuention, deuise and dreames ouershadowed with somme colour of goddes worde.'[73] The papacy and Mahometanism are bound in their cynical

incorporation of inventions and dreams, dressed up in the pretence of true scripture. Both are made anathema to Protestant conceptions of divinity.

Although there is considerable variation in the nature of, and rationale behind, the models of equivalence expounded by Bibliander, Bullinger, Knox and Calvin, their common focus on the conflation of the papacy and Mahomet leads directly to the strategies adopted by Thomas Drant, William Fulke and other preachers in England in the 1570s, and the historical confirmation of their equivalence presented by churchmen such as Edwin Sandys and Thomas Cooper. The development of this approach also illustrates how points of contention in the initial Reformation debates became established polemical tropes by the second half of the sixteenth century. The widespread public expression of equivalence between Mahomet and the papacy in this period was a result of a new vision of history, itself a response to new religious and political circumstances, and it became a key tool in both anti-Roman Catholic propaganda and in English Protestant self-definition. Utilising the traditionally demonised antichristian position occupied by Mahomet in the popular imagination, the demonstration of papal equivalence was a result of the rise of the papacy as the most immediate adversary to England. This in turn necessitated a shift in the way Mahomet had previously been portrayed, with a new emphasis upon innovation and idolatry to heighten Roman Catholic and Mahometan similarities, with some curious results later in the century.[74]

As a polemical strategy, identifying Mahomet and the papacy dominates English texts following Elizabeth I's excommunication in 1570, clearly serving as a calculated public riposte to papal aggression. It also appears in the Protestant development of the vice/virtue sequence, with the images accompanying Daye's 1578 prayerbook emphasising the brazen and dangerous scriptural innovation of the Alcoran, and introducing papal symbolism as a key characteristic of Idolatry, crushed by a female personification of 'Love of God'. Just as in contemporary Protestant millenarian writing, such as the work of John Bale, Mahomet and the papacy are imagined as deeply interconnected in God's larger plan, and closely equivalent in almost every respect.[75]

II. PAINTED WORDS: MAHOMET IN LATE-SIXTEENTH-CENTURY HISTORIES

The evolving conception of equivalence between Mahomet and the papacy was widespread in Protestant sermonising, religious writing and

illustration in the later sixteenth century, following its earlier elaboration in continental Protestant centres such as Basle and Zurich. Before examining the way in which this polemical shift was manifested in terms of an idolatrous Mahomet and his place on the professional stage, these developments need to be situated in a wider generic frame. To what extent did the notion of Mahomet's apparent equivalence with the papacy alter the ways in which his life was detailed in those histories produced in England (and in English) in the period following the break with Rome? Was the dominant pre-Reformation life established with the beginnings of print and polemicised by De Worde and St German still intact?

The matter of genre itself needs to be addressed. The writing I have discussed so far has been defined by its engagement in religious polemic, whether as a public sermon committed to print or as a printed text intervening in Reformation controversies. Yet it is abundantly clear that many of these writers (whether lay or divine) were engaged in history, and in the elaboration of a newly Protestant history, a project that required the presentation of a supposedly accurate life of Mahomet. In doing so, such writers drew upon histories, and wrote history – there is no easy dividing line between the vision of history expounded from pulpit and in religious tract and those historians engaged in Protestant history and historiography. Bibliander's *A godly consultation*, for example, is a theological discourse, and yet it presents a life of Mahomet that is more detailed and up to date than any hitherto printed in English, certainly since St German's *Here after followeth a lytell treatyse agaynst Mahumet and his cursed secte* (1531).

Bibliander's life of Mahomet appears to have been a treasure trove for later English writers, because although *A godly consultation* presents a rather ambiguous account of Mahomet's doctrine, Bibliander does not shrink from passing judgement on the prophet. He writes that Mahomet's 'detestable dedes' stemmed from a mind which is well known to have been 'couetous / cruell / vnryghteous / desirous and very gredye of honoure and dominion prone and redye to all manner of foule and filthye pleasure'.[76] We are told details of Mahomet's parents, one of whom was a Persian idolater, the other a Jew; of his startling eloquence; of 'the proportion / beutye / or shape of hys bodye' which was 'passynge excellent'; each mapped onto the key features of the earlier dominant life, all of which are present.[77]

One surprising addition is the return to a medieval tradition whose omission from the fifteenth-century English printed lives suggests it

had been a cause of some uncertainty: the floating tomb at Mecca.[78] Throughout his account Bibliander is careful to indicate any divergence in the various authorities he used as sources. So, on Mahomet's upbringing and education, 'Authors do varye and differ very moche'. Some affirm that he was taken in by 'Abdemonaplis a riche man amonge the Ismaelytes' who 'delytynge greately in the bewtye and wytt of the boye dyd not onely take hym for his sonne / but also delyuered hym all his ryches and wares that he sholde carye the[m] vpon cameles to the martes and merketes hyther and thyther'. Others say, 'whyche is more lyke to be true and more agreable to the wrytynges of the Mahumetanes' that Mahomet was an orphan, and became the ward of one Manephis, or as some wryters call hym Abdemonopolis' and was encouraged into trade in order to 'perlustrate Egypte and Syrya'.[79] The acknowledgement of the desirability of 'Mahometane' authenticity is another new and notable development, linking this text to the *Alcoran* that would be published the next year, and pointing towards the preoccupations of Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimage*, which appeared early in the following century. Attention is again drawn to Bibliander's sources when he notes that 'some wryters' assert that Mahomet's first wife was named 'Cadiga'. Bibliander denies any divergence in narratives of Mahomet's death, of which there were many – he opts for poison following wounds sustained in battle – but his presentation of what occurred post-mortem, 'as it is expressed in histories', once more indicates some uncertainty on his part, a gesture towards its dubious provenance. After the body did not ascend to heaven, and began to rot, his followers constructed a tomb. Bibliander continues: 'they closed it in a chiste or coffyn made of stele hangynge in the toppe of the te[m]ple by the power and veryte of an Adamant stone'.[80]

Although Bibliander suggests that God had long ago cast it down with 'thonder and lyghtenynge … that he might reproue the da[m]nable vanitie of soche superstition', the inclusion of the tomb enables him to draw a provocative parallel. Just as their religion obliges the 'Mahumetanes' to visit Mecca and 'the bodye of this stinking prophet', so do Roman Catholics travel to 'Compostell in Spayne' to seek 'the relyques of James'.[81] The context into which Mahomet was born is also given a great deal of emphasis: Pope Gregory the Great, 'the Romyshe puppet', had been in power, and 'dyd lade and troble rather then tryme the churche with ceremonies'. He was succeeded by Boniface III, a 'tyraunt' who relentlessly vaunted his own position and the role of the 'Bysshop of Rome' over all other bishops:

Therfor the moste ambitious and cursed contention beynge spronge vp betwyxte the bisshops of the c[h]urch / Mahumet was borne: whiche constitutige or ordininge a new superstition and kingedome myght in processe of tyme throwe or caste oute of the churche the moste prowde titles and lables of mytars and bragges of those men wiche falsely vsurpe with moste detestable pryde for to be called the vicares of Christe and dryue them awaye euen as one wedge dryueth oute an other.[82]

Prefiguring the later assertions of Cooper and Sandys, Bibliander here imagines Mahomet's birth and flourishing as a product of papal supremacy and Christian discord, imposing a teleological coherence in which the advent of Mahomet and Mahometanism is a just punishment while simultaneously an equivalent threat. Bibliander's conception of the life would become the archetypal Protestant life of Mahomet, a repositioning of the traditional life to assert papal culpability and the intertwining of the papacy and Mahometanism in the unfolding of God's plan for mankind.

Using history to demonstrate faith – and indeed using the life of Mahomet to illustrate error – was not the sole preserve of the reformers, as I have already suggested. In 1560, a translation of Johannes Sleidanus's *Commentaries* was published, titled *A famous chronicle of oure time*. Sleidanus, a German historian of the Reformation, reproduced documentation recording instructions from Pope Adrian VI to his ambassadors. He has little to say about Mahomet's life, but instead uses it to explain the rise of Luther just as Bibliander had done to explain the rise of the papacy. Adrian asks what plague of God might occur if those who sought the destruction of the papacy prevailed 'at the craftye perswasion of Luther, who endeuoureth wt painted words to disceaue & abuse me[n], as in times past, did Mahomet'?[83] One false prophet is equated with another. Elsewhere he goes into more detail:

For Luther differeth not muche from the secte of Mahomet, which permitteth men to mary many wiues, and after to forsake the same, by the whiche policie that mischieuous man bewitched, and allured the greatest part of the worlde: whiche thing thoughe Luther permitteth not, yet doth he aduise all them to mary, which haue vowed chastitie, gyuing the reignes of lybertie to mans lust and concupiscens, that he maye haue the mo of his confyderacie, to the vtter destruction of the common wealthe, namely of Germany.[84]

Here Adrian VI – as quoted by Sleidanus – echoes some of the key accusations made against Luther by More, linking Mahomet's advocacy of polygamy to Luther's disavowal of clerical chastity.[85] This polemical association prompts further connections – Luther's cynical encouragement of

lust in order to appeal to a greater constituency is a common feature of lives of Mahomet, while the general association of each with false prophecy, manipulation and physical baseness positions them ever closer.

In a later volume, Cardinal Jacques-Davy Duperron (1556–1618) expends considerable effort to affirm 'the particulars, wherein our Reformists, and the Turks do co[n]spire'.[86] Over sixty lengthy propositions, Duperron marshals considerable exegetical detail and close reference to Bibliander's *Alcoran* to irrefutably connect Mahometanism and Protestantism. For him Luther and Sergius are exactly equivalent, in matters ranging from heretical doctrine, the taking of wives, attitudes to the Apostles, the Old Testament and the Trinity and in misplaced notions of religious reform. In a curious departure from the norm, Duperron avoids the standard polemical parallel with Mahomet, shifting responsibility for core elements of Mahometanism to his renegade advisor. Thus it was 'by the industry & policy of *Sergius*' that Mahomet 'inuented, and pretended a reformation of the Roman Church'.[87]

Inevitably, however, a book devoted to establishing provocative parallels comes to a suitably contemporary surrogate for the Mahometan prophet. Mahomet had 'erected himself by subtlety and treachery' as 'a great Prince' and '*Supreme Head of the Church of God*'. King Henry VIII had done the same. Mahomet viciously punished those who 'would not allow the doctrine, published in his *Alcoran*'. Henry, this '*English Antiochus*', did likewise. Mahomet 'had diuers wives, and *Concubines* together, and at the same time':

> *Henry of England* (who otherwise, no doubt, wanted not his *Seraglio*) had indeed (in compare) but few wyues, yet when be was weary of one Wyfe, his accustomed stratageme was commonly to accuse her of some forged disloyalty, and so force them (one after an other) either to diuorce, or to loose their heads; thus making Cruelty & murther, a staulking horse (as it were) for his next Mariage. An impiety neuer practized by *Mahumet*![88]

In only one other 'kind of Wickednes' did Henry surpass Mahomet. The sources demonstrate that Mahomet never destroyed 'any one Religious house, or Monastery erected before his tyme'. Henry, however, 'did ouerthrow all the Monasteryes, and Religions Houses in *England*'. In fact this irreligious king 'might be reputed as great a Prophet, as euer *Mahumet* was' because he, as Duperron sarcastically observes, 'was able (supernaturally forsooth) to foretell, diuer Moneths before, of what kind of death, for what cause, and at what tyme his present liuing Wyfe (though then being in good health) must after dye'.[89] By asserting the equivalence of Mahomet and Henry VIII, before demonstrating later the shocking ways in which

the English king surpasses even Mahomet, Duperron uses the prophet as an emblem of secular infidelity, of the dangers of religious schism and of the corrupting nature of worldly power. In a French context, his intention – as his full title demonstrates – was to attack the Huguenots (whose allies were the Protestant English). In England, the translation and publication of this controversial text in the momentous year of 1642 was an attempt, as Christopher Highley has recognised, to redirect 'the work's invective against English Puritan extremists'.[90] Duperron's work was not alone in this regard, and in these terms it belongs in the company of the polemic discussed in Chapter 4.

Despite these examples, the incorporation of a polemical equivalence between Mahomet and Protestants/Catholics was unusual in historical writing of this period. The infrequency with which it occurred seems likely to have been a consequence of provenance – although Higden, Lydgate and Mandeville had offered an established, verified and coherent English life of the prophet, new material was repeatedly translated from continental volumes which were, in the main, by Roman Catholic authors. Away from religious polemic, this Catholic source material maintained an earlier preoccupation with Mahomet's perceived heresy, and only rarely engaged in debates about equivalence – instead its authors tended to write in order to convey information and justify military engagement with the Ottomans. This meant that a dominant English life of Mahomet was regularly corrected and augmented, but also that it could be insulated from Reformation politics, particularly in those popular and historical works that focussed (like *The Golden Legend* had done) on individual lives and the moral lessons such lives might teach. They continued to be unquestioningly reproduced and retranslated. Not everyone wanted a Catholic Mahomet.

One such example, almost contemporary with the English translation of Sleidanus's *Commentaries*, is *An epitome of Chronicles*, gathered initially by Thomas Lanquet before being extended to 1559 by Thomas Cooper and Robert Crawley. It is a collection that offers didactic examples, whether of lives or specific historical episodes, because such examples 'set as images before vs, do not onely openly teache, but also bothe warne and stirre our myndes, so that therby wyth a certayne delite and desyre they be kyndled towardes vertue and honestie'.[91] The life of Mahomet in the *epitome* is typically brief: during 'a great confusion of thinges both in the east and west', Mahomet emerged from 'base stocke' to become a merchant. Schooled by the Nestorian heretic Sergius, he marries his master's widow, gaining riches. Following a period learning magic, he fools the people

with his false religion before dying of the 'fallinge sickenesse' around the age of forty.[92] Beyond these bare and familiar elements, the emphasis falls squarely on heresy. Mahometanism is presented as a composite of existing heresies, and the compiler quotes directly from St German, or Riccoldo his source, in listing the heresies Mahomet supposedly drew upon.[93] That is all Lanquet offers – short, sharp and to the point.

Similarly, Richard Raynoldes's study of divine intervention, *A chronicle of all the noble emperours of Rome* (1571), digresses into a functional version of the life via a discussion of Heraclius, as many of the earlier printed lives had done. Yet despite its publication date and the nature of the polemical material being circulated in England in the early 1570s, Raynoldes is completely uninterested in establishing papal parallels. Like some of the earlier English lives, his narrative is disjointed in a way that suggests an uneasy mixing of sources, and although some of the traditional elements are present (the wealthy first wife, the prohibition on religious debate, the many later wives, the mingling of Judaic and Christian theology and ritual, the forbidding of pork and a luxurious and sensual paradise), there are some curious digressions. Reynoldes enthusiastically blames the Arabians, 'who neuer obeyed kingdomes or lawes', because it was in response to their 'licentious' sins that Machomet created a law that might satisfy their desire 'of libertye'.[94] Reynoldes is also very keen on biblical genealogy, again as the early English lives had been, but adds a twist of his own: it is clear that Mahomet and the Saracens can be traced back to Moses, 'that the ofspringe of *Ismaell* who descended from *Agar* did possesse *Arabia*, therof the cittye *Agra* hath his name of *Agar* the mother of *Ismaell*, and theyr people *Agrei*'. However, to inspire glory and pride in his followers, and instil in them the certainty of their godly destiny, Mahomet cynically chose to tell them that they were '*Saraceni*' born 'of *Sara* [rather] then of her handmaid *Agar*.'[95] Finally, Reynoldes's personal interest in Russia leads him to a consideration of the renegade monk Sergius, whom he asserts 'came into Russia, and spredde many heresies there, and manye iudeicall Cerimonyes foolishe and abhominable', which, of course, he 'will sette oute at large in a booke of the *Moscouiticall* kingdome' – a book that never seems to have appeared.[96] That at least one reader was interested in Raynoldes's insertion of this non-Roman life is clear from a marginally annotated 'Mahomet' marking this section in the Huntington Library copy.[97]

Lanquet and Raynoldes indicate that an established life continued to circulate, which English translators and compilers felt at liberty to trim, mould and expand as they saw fit. The didactic purpose remains, at least

ostensibly, given that although there are some obvious moral and theological lessons to be drawn from these English versions of Mahomet's life, there is also an element of titillation about such anthologising. The antitype epitomised by Mahomet had for centuries articulated Christian anxieties, but the frequency with which it is subsequently reproduced suggests he may have become something else, even a figure of ridicule. Nevertheless, the episodic approach adopted by both Lanquet and Reynoldes (and many others) was self-consciously based on the recycling of earlier material, with some augmentation – their lives of Mahomet were relatively minor subsections within larger works, not intrinsic to the whole.

Far more central is the place occupied by Mahomet in one of the most authoritative texts on the subject of 'Saracen' history and religion in this period – Thomas Newton's translation of Celio Augustino Curione's *Sarracenicae historiae libri tres* (plus some other additions) as *A notable historie of the Saracens* (1575). The extended title of the work places the prophet in the context of a genealogical, cultural and historical exploration of the 'Saracen' religion with the intention of explaining current Ottoman dominance and military successes. The volume offers its reader 'a discourse' of Mahometan 'affaires and actes from the byrthe of Mahomet their first peeuish prophet and founder', and to this is annexed 'a compendious chronycle of all their yeerely exploytes, from the sayde Mahomets time tyll this present yeere'. Mahomet is the key point of origin for the Saracens and for the 'Turkes, Souldans, Mamalukes, Assassines, Tartarians and Sophians'.[98] Like Reynoldes and Lanquet, Curione and his translator are entirely uninterested in equating Mahometanism with Roman Catholicism and the papacy – this is once more a different kind of history, translated at a point when no one model had a monopoly on Mahomet.

Aside from reproducing many of the standard details, and despite a lack of polemical equivalence, Newton's translation of Curione shares far more in common with Bibliander's earlier *godly consultation* than with Reynoldes and Lanquet. Curione is less revealing about his sources and their disagreements, attempting instead to offer something more unequivocally authoritative, but Bibliander's text is a likely source – both works were originally published in Basle, and concur on core details. Mahomet, for instance, was born in 'Ittacip' in Arabia according to Bibliander and in 'Itraripe' according to Newton's translation of Curione. Both agree that his mother was named 'Emma' and was a Jew; both focus on his apprenticeship to 'Abdimoneples' and on his eloquence

(*A notable historie* even reproduces two long speeches purportedly given by Mahomet).[99] The new emphasis upon his physical appearance is also developed. Mahomet

> was of a meane stature, bigge headed, somewhat broune complexioned, cheerefully countenaunced and liuely coloured, a long bearde, and yet not hoare: because always as it beganne to waxe graye, with oyntmentes he altered it: his visage and looke was gaue and portly, pretending a kynde of Maiestie ioyned with gentlenesse and curtesie, hys legges very well proportioned, his bodie in goyng or mouyng pleasaunt and gentle, and lyke (as they terme it) to the course of a styll running Ryuer, in talke verie curteous, in myde and body both stoute, stronge and venturous, quicke and prompte of witte, but the same (as *Salust* writeth of *Catiline*) wicked and disposed to all mischiefe, bolde, hardie, and suche a one that cared for no perilles.[100]

Such physical qualities humanise Mahomet and – alongside the focus upon his gifts as an orator – explain anew how he 'persuaded and allured' so many to follow him, both in his lifetime and after his death. Curione thus finds an explanation for Christianity's current predicament in Mahomet's talent for self-promotion. After all, Curione asserts, these gifts disguised the fact that Mahomet was 'fickle mynded and double in all hys doynges … [and a] deepe counterfeytor and dissembler in euerye matter'. One important consequence of his dissembling faults is the 'great varietie and diuerse sortes of sectes in hys Religion', something hitherto largely ignored or unknown to English writers.[101] It was a combination of Mahomet's talents and his faults that led to the creation of Mahometanism, 'a new kind of religion, patched and gathered together out of the erronious Schismes and hereticall dreames of all Sectes' and of the 'filthie *Alcorane*'.[102]

The comparison of Mahomet with the Roman politician Catiline at the end of Curione's description echoes Sallust's portrayal of the archetypal conspirator, his eloquence and gifts as well as his vices and apparently appalling crimes.[103] For Newton and Curione, this is only the beginning. It is also the political dimension of the comparison that is important: Mahomet's military campaigns are given close attention, and his rise is carefully positioned against a background of conflict between the Roman Empire (under Heraclius and Phocas) and 'the Barbarous Nations'. Mahomet's otherwise impossible successes are rationalised in the context of Christian discord, and he is characterised primarily as a warrior and a political leader whose intention was 'to mooue and stirre vp the people to sedition' – an element that had been present in the earliest printed accounts, but which would become increasingly prominent.[104]

The question of whether Roman Catholic or Protestant was 'most like to Mahomet' was always a rhetorical one, asked by polemicists who wanted to use Mahomet's life as a demonising tool. It was never really a question but rather an assertion of equivalent infidelity in opposition to a conception of the true Christian church, a powerful and provocative means of self-identification. The emergence of this assertion of equivalence is an important legacy of the early Reformation debates; the development of equivalence shows how the opposition between the papacy and what became Protestantism developed and hardened along specific lines. It also demonstrates that English reformers were keen to engage in, and continue, continental religious debates and polemic (both in English and in public), and it elucidates how the life of Mahomet was warped for new propagandist purposes. An English public were being taught how to think about the papacy and Christian history in terms of an antichristian figure whose position they understood. These shifts were not simply confined to sermons and reformist tracts either, but reverberated in major English texts of the period, such as the *Acts and Monuments*, and in material that, to an extent, spanned social spheres, such as the decorative sequence presented in Daye's prayerbook.

The period from Henry VIII's break with Rome to the late 1580s consequently ushers in not a single new conception of Mahomet, but rather a range of coexisting and overlapping responses and new layers of meaning. One such response was to use the traditional 'facts' to assert papal equivalence. However, Luther's advocacy of the public dissemination of the *Alcoran*, and Bibliander's determination to present as comprehensive a picture of Mahometan belief as was possible, led to waves of new information becoming available to English readers. The result of this was a multiplying array of printed lives of Mahomet, as English writers and anthologisers picked out elements from a range of sources – both old and new – to fashion hybrid lives that suited their polemical, generic and/or religious purposes.

One otherwise unremarkable example can be found in Lodowick Lloyd's *The consent of time* (1590), another text concerned with 'the beginning, continuaunce, succession, and ouerthrowes of kings, kingdomes, states, and gouernments'.[105] Lloyd's account of Mahomet is an intriguing (and typical) amalgam – he is happy to refer his reader to the classical Greek geographer Strabo on Arabian geography and to Curione on the genealogy of the Saracens, but proceeds to dip in and out of Curione's life of the prophet, mixing it with some of the more outlandish elements of medieval accounts. Although it had been studiously ignored by Curione,

Lloyd returns to one of Mahomet's elaborate deceptions, asserting that 'by the dayly accesse of a white pigeon in the eare to eate graines of wheat, which he vsed to deceiue the simple, supposing the pigeon to bee some spirit from God that instructed *Mahomet* in all good discipline and religion'.[106] Similarly he turns to the earlier lives – and probably Higden – to assert that this '*Mahomet* vomited his malice in such sort, that not only *Asia*, but *Affricke* and *Europe* were by him infected'.[107] Yet alongside these standard polemical tropes, Lloyd reflects the wider shift towards an emphasis on politics and military campaigns, pointing out that Mahomet 'grew of such credite within *Arabia*, that he made lawes and decrees' and 'altered the whole course of the *Arabians* gouernment'. This political and military interest is further demonstrated in a focus on the difference between Mahometan and Christian dating – the Mahometans count their years, according to Lloyd, from 'the escape of Mahomet by flight, which the Arabians call Hegira'. Again, this had been emphasised by Curione (who had named it 'Legira, which is to say the yeere of flight or transmigration').[108] Here was a recognition that Mahometan dating began with political and military turmoil, unlike the celebrated origins of Christian dating in the nativity of Christ. But there is also an acknowledgement of Mahomet as a statesman and military leader, and a keen interest in the detail of Mahometan culture. Lloyd's muddling of religious polemic with historical writing makes his book contradictory – early in this short account Mahomet is described as 'this poisoned scorpion and only plague of Christians', whereas in conclusion he is '*Mahomet* the great prophet, and the only Prince of Arabia'.[109]

Lloyd is keen to exploit the potential in this material for contemporary religious polemic. Both Mahomet and the pope, he asserts,

> beganne at one times as two tyrants to persecute the Christians. These two grew so great, that they ruled all Christian Emperours, kings, princes and states: one, making them to holde his stirope, and to kisse his foote, the other with sworde and fire, tyrannized ouer kingdomes and nations, encreased his fame by blood and tyrannie.[110]

Lloyd's emphasis on tyranny and vanity, and his incorporation of the model of papal/Mahometan symbiosis proffered earlier by William Fulke and others, makes this life a true hybrid, a typically English creation. Drawing together elements of the medieval life, the new focal points of recent accounts and the polemical thrust of equivalence, Lloyd's Mahomet is a good example in miniature of the kinds of models available to English men and women by the late 1580s. Reformation had torn up the rulebook

for writing this life. Coupled with the seemingly relentless Ottoman rise to global dominion, Mahomet retained his earlier prominence but gained a new kind of relevance. His assured infidelity helped to make sense of a changed world.

The account of Mahomet in *The consent of time* offers one final, apparently contradictory, element. Early in his account Lloyd asserts that Mahomet's forging of his 'lawe' took place between the two other monotheisms in the region – he taught his followers to 'accuse the Iewes as wicked cruel tyrants' and ridiculed the Christians for their 'ignorancie' and 'simplicitie', 'scoffing them for their superstitious ceremonies' – a reference to a widespread Christian awareness of the prophet's anti-idolatrous stance.[111] However, in his final lines, when discussing the life of Mahomet's second successor 'Haumar', Lloyd relates that he was slain by a Persian woman named Margaret, 'as hee was praying, kneeling before the newe erected idole of *Mahomet*'.[112] Having previously asserted Mahomet's monotheism, this bizarre shift towards Mahometan idolatry suggests wider pressures, not least the increasing threat of the papacy and Roman Catholicism. In reformed England, Mahomet re-emerges in newly hybrid forms that embody a range of topical concerns. In the heady and precarious climate of late-sixteenth-century England, virulent anti-papistry mixed with new political dynamics in printshop and playhouse to produce a curiously creative reversal in English attitudes to Mahomet.

CHAPTER 3

Old Mahomet's Head: Idols, Papists and Mortus Ali *on the English Stage*

It is probably the summer of 1587, perhaps of 1588. A new play, titled *Alphonsus of Arragon*, is being performed by the Queen's Men at the newly built Rose playhouse, on Bankside.[1] The stage, recently vacated by Venus, stands empty for just a moment. In the space opened at the rear of the fore-stage is set a plinth, upon which is placed a large brass idol – a '*brazen Head*' (l. 1245).[2] Flames burst from the mouth of the idol and drums rumble from deep within the theatre. Enter two priests, confused and alarmed at the supernatural signs emanating from this 'sacred seate' (l. 1251), as the drums continue to boom and the head belches fire. Neither, it seems, have ever 'heard before, / Such feareful sounds, nor saw such wondrous sights' (ll. 1264–5). Then a voice interrupts these whispered fears. It comes from the idol, from the mouth of Mahomet, their God 'of peereles power' (l. 1256). It begins with chastisement:

> You cannot tell, nor will you seeke to know,
> Oh peruerse Priest, how carelesse are you waxt?
> As when my foes approach vnto my gates,
> You stand still talking of I cannot tell:
> Go packe you hence, and meete the Turkish kings,
> Which now are drawing to my Temple ward:
> Tell them from me, God *Mahomet* is dispos'd
> To prophesie no more to *Amuracke*,
> Since that his tongue is waxen now so free,
> As that it needs must chat and raile at me.
> (ll. 1269–78)

Both priests drop to their knees. They beg Mahomet to reconsider, for they will surely be killed if he refuses to prophecy for the Ottoman ruler, and he relents. He will 'prophesie vnto them for this once, / But in

Philip Henslowe's stage properties (for the Lord Admiral's Men) include an 'owld Mahemetes head'. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert eds, *Henslowe's Diary: Edited with Supplementary Material, Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961) p. 319.

such wise, as they shall neither boast, / Nor you be hurt in any kinde of wise' (ll. 1287–9). The three richly attired kings – Belinus, the exiled king of Naples; Claramont, the king of the Moors; and Arcastus, the king of Barbary, all clients and close allies of Amurack the 'Grand Turk' – are then conducted to the idol. The solemnity of the occasion is impressed upon them, and they kneel before 'mightie' Mahomet (he is also named Mahound) whom they recognise to be a 'God' (l. 1342). He delivers his dreadful prophecy:

> Princes of *Turkie*, and Embassadors
> Of *Amuracke*, to mightie *Mahomet*,
> I needs must muse, that you which erst haue bene
> The readiest souldiers of the triple world,
> Are now become so slacke in your affaires,
> As when you should with bloudie blade in hand,
> Be hacking helmes in thickest of your foes,
> You stand still loytering in the Turkish soyle.
> What know you not, how that it is decreed,
> By all the gods, and chiefly by my selfe:
> That you with triumph should all Crowned bee:
> Make haste Kings, least when the fates do see,
> How carlesly you do neglect their words,
> They call a Counsell, and force *Mahomet*
> Against his will some other thing to set.
> Send *Fabius* backe to *Amuracke* againe,
> To haste him forwards in his enterprise:
> And march you on with all the troupes you have,
> To *Naples* ward, to conquer *Aragon*.
> For if you stay, both you and all your men,
> Must needs be sent downe straight to *Lymbo* den.
> (ll. 1309–29)

As soon as Mahomet concludes, the kings are advised that time is of the essence: 'Muse not braue Kings at Mahomets discourse', for what 'that mouth doth say, / Assure yourself it needs must happen so' (ll. 1330–2). Following martial pronouncements of their readiness for battle, they do as they have been commanded, and the stage is cleared. One scene later they will all be dead, crushed by the all-conquering Christian hero, Alphonsus, intentionally sent to their slaughter by this prophecy. Thus Mahomet's bizarre first appearance on the early modern English stage comes to an end.[3]

In a number of respects this episode appears odd. It is a key scene from *Alphonsus*, almost certainly by Robert Greene (the titlepage indicates only

'R. G.'), quite possibly his first play for the professional stage. Its peculiarities are also specifically English, and a product of English concerns – this idol scene seems to be of Greene's own invention and is nowhere to be found in his main source, Barthelemy Fazio's memoir of Alphonso V, *Bartholomaei Facii De Rebus Gestis ab Alphonso Primo Nepolitanorum Rege Commentariorum Libri decem* (published in 1560 and 1563), which is only loosely adhered to. There are two possible models for the form and location Greene adopts for his Mahometan idol. The first example is clearly classical and well known to Greene: the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, the most famous of its kind in the ancient world. Greene repeatedly refers to Delphi in his *Pandosto*, written in or around 1588, roughly the same time he was writing *Alphonsus*. Mahomet is thus transposed into an idolatrous classical framework – he is only one amongst many Gods, and subject to their collective will.

The second and perhaps less apparent example is hinted at in the Ottoman Sultan Amurack's earlier description of this 'darksome groue, / Where Mahomet this many a hundred yeare / Hath prophesied vnto our auncestors' (ll. 896–98). 'Groves' appear frequently in the Old Testament, almost always as sites of idolatrous worship: the great Biblical idol destroyers all cut down groves on behalf of the true faith – Hezekiah cut groves and smashed the brazen serpent (2 Kings 18:4); Asa cut down groves and broke images (2 Chronicles 14:3); the altar of Baal and its grove was ruined by Gideon (Judges 6:25–8); and both Jehoshaphat and Josiah were enthusiastic despoilers of groves (2 Chronicles 17:6 and 2 Kings 23:14). There are numerous other examples, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, all erroneously generated by a misreading in the Septuagint and Vulgate Bibles (and following them in the Coverdale and Authorised English versions) of the Hebrew *Asherah*, then translated as grove but now understood to refer either to a goddess or to a pillar serving as an idol. Greene's use of a 'darksome groue' in which to place his idol of Mahomet would have seemed perfectly in accordance with Biblical depictions of idolatry, placing 'Mahometanism' firmly in a pre-Christian context and in opposition to English Protestantism. In the wake of the break with Rome, Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I had all been symbolically associated with the great idol destroyers of the Bible, to whom Mahomet and his 'lawe' are placed firmly in opposition.[4]

Classical and biblical idolatry are important contexts, but Greene's idol of Mahomet is not solely defined by them. Speaking 'brazen' idols such as this one appear in legends surrounding the scholar and theologian Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175–1263), Roger Bacon (c. 1214–94) and others, and take

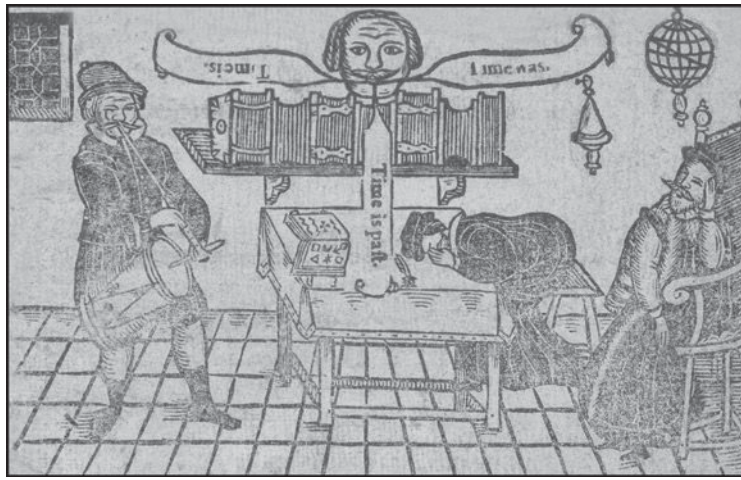


Figure 17. Robert Greene, *The honorable historie of Frier Bacon, and Frier Bongay. As it was lately plaid by the Prince Palatine his Seruants* (London: Printed by Elizabeth Allde dwelling neere Christ-Church, 1630) – titlepage image. © The British Library Board, 162.h.1.

different forms on the medieval and early modern English stage, for instance in George Peele's *Old Wives Tale* (printed in 1595) or in Thomas Dekker's *If this be not a good play, the Devil is in it* (1611).[5] Most relevant is the 'brazen head' prominently used in Greene's own most popular drama, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (probably written in or around 1589). In that play Friar Bacon boasts that 'With seven years' tossing nigromantic charms, / Poring upon dark Hecat's principles' he has 'fram'd out a monstrous head of brass, / That, by th'enchanting forces of the devil, / Shall tell out strange and uncouth aphorisms/ And girt fair England with a wall of brass' (XI.15–16, 17–20). At one point the head is accompanied by a flash of lightning and great noise, suggesting it is a dangerous object that signifies necromantic powers and prohibited knowledge.[6] This too is clearly an element in the *Alphonsus* episode.

Greene's use of the idol in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* also offers some clues to its stage appearance. As Kevin LaGrandeur has noted, this 'prosthesis of sorts' is not only shaped 'like a human's [head], but … Bacon's bronze head is said to contain imitations of the human anatomical parts, "as in a naturall mans head"'.[7] The image of the head accompanying the titlepage to the 1630 edition of the play (Figure 17) looks, again as LaGrandeur has pointed out, 'uncannily human' with its lifelike

features, hair and moustache.[8] Here, in a celebrated episode from the play, the brazen head speaks for the only time while Bacon sleeps and his servant Miles looks on. It was – as many critics have pointed out – common for early modern stage properties to be reused and adapted, certainly if they proved popular.[9] Such was the appetite for spectacular stage effects (and there are numerous examples in both these plays) that if the 'brazen head' worked, the commercially astute Greene would no doubt incorporate it into his next production, as would others. Bacon's head, then, is almost certainly the same head used earlier for Mahomet in *Alphonsus*, adapted for use in his next play. A moustache was, after all, a key signifier of an Islamic identity on the stage, as demonstrated by Thomas Kyd in Hieronimo's reference to 'a Turkish cap, / A black mustachio and a fauchion' (4.1.144–5) as necessary stage properties for the role of 'Soliman the Turkish Emperor' in the play within *The Spanish Tragedy*.[10] Perhaps the necromantic head that appears in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* carried with it some of the dramatic charge of its earlier incarnation as Mahomet.

While the head depicted on the 1630 titlepage may have originally been Mahomet's head, what we see may not necessarily resemble Mahomet, at least not quite. For a start, there was probably no expectation of authenticity in representation – a task made all the more difficult by a lack of agreement in the sources as to what Mahomet looked like. Although it is possible that the brazen head used in *Alphonsus* appeared on the stage exactly like this one – and the stage directions reveal nothing about its appearance – it seems likely that a Mahometan dimension was emphatically signalled visually, most likely through a turban. Despite surprisingly few references to the turban in early modern drama, one important example that offers a flavour of the way in which it may have been used and exploited in a dramatic context actually comes from another play thought to be by Robert Greene, the now fragmentary *John of Bordeaux* (dated to around 1592). Early in that play an English manservant, Perce, humourously contemplates the Ottoman ruler 'Amerothe', noting that 'he semes to be trobled with the headake' because he has 'such a vengable manie of cloute a bought the pat[e] on him' (ll. 144–5).[11] This reference to 'a vengable manie of cloute' (a considerable amount of material) worn on the head is a comic reflection upon the role of the turban in defining a Muslim character. Earlier official records from the Office of the Revels at the court of Philip and Mary includes elaborate male headdresses that are probably turbans, involving white sarcanet stretched over a hooped ash wood frame, topped with coloured fabric and tassels.[12] English readers of

travel literature would already have been well acquainted with 'turbants' or 'tulipans' from accounts collected in Hakluyt and later Purchas, and in a domestic setting the image of the 'turbanned [and, as I have suggested, often moustachioed] Turk' was a familiar one – adorning archery targets (the 'Turks of tenpence') and featuring on the painted signs of taverns and print houses, such as John Barnes's shop at the Turk's Head in Fleet street, near the Mitre tavern (around 1600), and later Christopher Conningsby's shop at the 'golden Turk's head', also on Fleet Street, next to St Dunstan's church.[13]

The most concise description of the Turk's head motif, however, comes from a seventeenth-century source, Randle Holme's *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, which records: 'The Turks head is always known by his Turbot, or Turkish cap, which is nothing else but a length of fine white Linen, rowled up in [the] form of a round Cap like a ball, those of the better sort have them adorned with Feathers, and Jewells of Gold, and precious stones' (Figure 18).[14] Holme's image gives a sense of what Greene's idol of Mahomet may well have looked like – but it is a 'Turk's head'. Holme does not discuss Mahomet's head at all. This focus on the 'Turk' as exemplar of Mahometanism is typical: there is no consistent tradition of depicting Mahomet in Christian art of this period and he is only rarely illustrated, unlike the well-established and widely recognised image of the 'Turk'. Some thirteenth- and fourteenth-century images of Muslim idolatry do illustrate Mahomet as an unadorned, turban-less human figure in miniature, reminiscent of classical deities, and this may be the model Greene is drawing on.[15] However, one inevitable result of the new prominence of the 'Turk' in print is that in subsequent decades Christian images of Mahomet become consistently 'Turkified', mapped onto the more readily available icon of the 'Grand Turk' and less visually monstrous than some earlier medieval images and complete with turban, moustache, beard and robes. This process was well underway by the late sixteenth century, appearing as early as Charles V's *Los Honores* tapestries in the 1520s (Figure 18), and is clearly at work in the detailed depiction of Mahomet, 'Prophete des Turcs', in Michel Baudier's influential *Histoire generale de la religion des turcs* first published in Paris in 1625 (Figure 19).[16] As a consequence it seems plausible – if not likely, given Greene's use of the turban elsewhere – that the first depiction of Mahomet on the English stage adhered to this convention and featured a turban. Furthermore, the next depiction, in William Percy's obscure *Mahomet and His Heaven* (of 1601), stipulates that the prophet wears a green turban featuring a silver crescent.[17]



Figure 18. 'The Turks Head' – Randle Holme, *The academy of armory, or, A storehouse of armory and blazon* (Chester: printed by the Author, 1688) p. 390.
© The British Library Board, 137.f.7.

Among Philip Henslowe's papers is recorded an inventory of the Lord Admiral's Men's apparel made in March 1598, which refers to an 'owld Mahemetes head'.[18] Although there has been some speculation that this refers to a headdress of some sort from a different play, W. W. Greg has convincingly argued it must refer to Greene's idol from *Alphonsus*, probably in the context of a revival of the play that also prompted the only printed edition, of 1599.[19] The play with which it is associated is named *Mahomett* (as well as *Mahemet* and *Mahewmet*) by Henslowe in his ledger, and was performed as an old play by the Admiral's Men in August 1594 – making a tidy profit – and eight times subsequently.[20] I concur with Greg, and Fleay before him, that this is *Alphonsus*, and that the play had come into Henslowe's hands from the Queen's Men.[21] That the 'owld Mahemetes head' of the inventory is clearly Mahomet's head rather than the heads of Argus or Iris that feature elsewhere in Henslowe's papers



Figure 19. 'Mahomet Prophete des Turcs' – Michel Baudier, *Histoire generale de la religion des tvrcs* (Paris, 1625). © The British Library Board, 149.c.8.

further suggests something distinctly Mahometan about it. Daniel Vitkus has asserted that such a head was 'probably […] turbanned', although he goes on to state that it was a 'standard stage property of the London companies', which seems to me unlikely, given the dearth of plays featuring such an idol.[22]

That one short but striking scene might come to define the entire play in Henslowe's records might seem implausible, were it not the case that this particular head seems to have gained a certain contemporary notoriety. In George Peele's 'A Farewell', a poem penned to celebrate the departure of Francis Drake and John Norris on their counter-Armada to the Iberian coast, printed in early 1589, there are a series of references to the popular theatre. Peele's heroes are exhorted to:

> Bid Theaters and proud Tragedians,
> Bid Mahomet's Poo, and mighty Tamburlaine,
> King Charlemagne, Tom Stukeley and the rest,
> Adiewe […][23]

Mahomet's Poo is a version of 'Poll' or head, no doubt referring to Greene's idol, which at that point appears to have been unique – and famous – on the stage. Mentioning the idol alongside 'mighty Tamburlaine' as an icon of the professional stage might even suggest that its remarkable popularity could recalibrate popular perceptions of Mahomet altogether. Only one other extant play from this period features Mahomet's head – albeit briefly and in a non-speaking role – and that is Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (1610–11). Intriguingly, Daborne and Henslowe initiated a close, if fraught, working relationship in subsequent years, so this play may feasibly feature the very same Mahomet's head that Henslowe is recorded owning in early 1598, and which seems to have starred in at least a revival version of Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon*, more than twenty years before.[24] In this context 'owld' would make sense.

Daborne's use of the head is less prominent than Greene's, and perhaps slightly less spectacular, but no less redolent of idolatry. It is brought onstage as a key property in the eighth scene of the play, in which the pirate John Ward 'turns Turk'. The ceremony is presented as a dumb show, and begins: 'Enter two bearing half-moons, one with a Mahomet's head following. After them, the Mufti, or chief priest, two meaner priests bearing his train' (8. s.d.).[25] In order for Ward to renounce his faith and turn to Mahometanism, he is dressed in a turban and robe; he is given a sword (which is then taken away); he has to swear on the Mahomet's head, and then spurn a glass of wine offered him by a Christian. One might expect a convert to swear upon the Alcoran, as Mercadorus had been exhorted to do in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (1581), but here the idol of Mahomet has taken its place. The apparent conflation of Mahomet as idol and Alcoran in this ceremony indicates how closely connected they were imagined to be. It is possible, however, that the inclusion of the head was simply a convenience – it was an available Mahometan prop alongside other props used in this scene – but its use does suggest the longevity of particular kinds of dramatic symbolism, enshrined in stage properties. The inclusion and earlier fame of the idol of Mahomet's head indicated how Mahomet was conceived dramatically, readily accepted as an idol by Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences.

Greene's depiction of Mahomet in *Alphonsus of Aragon* is curious. There was not yet any dominant tradition of visually depicting Mahomet in the late 1580s, but there was a clearly dominant tradition of depicting him textually, and that is a tradition with which Greene and Daborne seem to be completely at odds. From Caxton onwards, the earliest English printers had cherry-picked the most popular manuscript texts to transfer into the new medium of print and, in many cases, into English, and some of the earliest and most popular prominently featured the established life of Mahomet – widely known texts such as the *Polychronicon*, *The Golden Legend* and Mandeville's *Travels*. These lives, drawn from a series of twelfth- to fourteenth-century sources but consolidating one authoritative tradition, primarily focus upon Mahomet as flesh-and-blood heresiarch and Mahometanism as heresy. For the pre-1450 period, John Tolan's dual model through which Muslims and Islam were understood – as either idolatrous 'pagan Saracens', worshipping Mahomet alone or as one of a number of gods (including Termagent, Apollo and Jupiter), as we see in *The Song of Roland*, for instance; or as violent, debauched heretics, devoted to the cynical heresiarch 'Mahomet' – holds good.[26] In the first of these traditions Mahomet is a god, an idol; in the second he is a weak, carnal, manipulative, mortal man.

For the post-1450 period, and certainly in those texts produced in England, the depiction of Mahomet as mortal man is initially entirely dominant. He is presented as heresiarch in many of my earlier examples – in *Here begynneth a lytell treatise of the turkes lawe called Alcaron* (1519) and *Here after followeth a lytell treatyse agaynst Mahumet and his cursed secte* (1531), through the debates surrounding the reformation of the English church, to later histories such as Thomas Lanquet's *An Epitome of Chronicles* (1559), Curione's *A Notable History* (1575), through a wide range of Protestant religious/political writing. The authors of such books deliberately eschewed the curious hybrid model of heresy and idolatry that surfaces in a few early printed lives. Of the English examples, Higden is unique in this respect, with his relation of the erection of a necromantically charged statue of 'machometes ymage' in Spain.[27] In ignoring this apparently outdated conception of Muslim idolatry, subsequent writers presented a clearly defined and detailed biography of the prophet which focused relentlessly on his cynicism, physical and moral corruption and the nature of his fabricated miracles, pointing to his role as mortal heresiarch and ignoring – even rejecting – any notion of Mahometan idolatry in favour of monotheism. Yet this outdated and discredited concept seems

not only to have been resurrected on London's stages, but to have enjoyed considerable notoriety.

1. ROMANCE AND IDOLATRY

The reasons for the unlikely rebirth of Mahomet as idol are complex. Any explanation needs to begin by challenging the apparently straightforward teleological progression of Christian perceptions of Mahomet from a dual model of idolatry/ heresy to a single monotheistic heresy. Depicting Mahomet as heresiarch and his religion as a 'sect' was the dominant approach in England, as in much of Christendom, during the second half of the sixteenth century. The sheer volume of texts reproducing this version of the life affirms it. However, the heresiarch model was not the only possibility in circulation and with the printing, repackaging and circulation of a number of prominent medieval romance texts in this period, a vision of Mahometan idolatry persisted, albeit in a self-consciously antiquated and peripheral form. Such accounts mark the re-emergence of a romance version quite distinct from the Mahomet depicted in English chronicles, travel texts and religious tracts and sermons.

The re-emergence of idolatry therefore contradicts learned opinion. It is clear, however, that the Anglicised printed versions of French and Italian romances circulated widely and were extraordinarily popular by the early 1590s. Perhaps the first example of this is John Bourchier's translation of *Histoire des merveilleux faicts du preux et vaillant chevalier Artus de Bretaigne* as *Arthur of Brytayn* (printed posthumously in 1560). Bourchier was both a statesman at the court of Henry VIII and a translator, also producing English versions of Froissart's *Chronicles* and *Huon of Bordeaux*.[28] Rather than surrounded by acolytes, in this romance Mahomet is encountered by Arthur alone and without adherents, as a simple idol, reflecting again the ubiquity and longevity of the association between the prophet and idolatry.[29] There is no direct suggestion of Mahometanism here at all: hearing 'the gryndynge togyther of two milstones one vpon another […] wherby all the earth about Arthur did shake' he finds 'a great fat of brasse wherin there was a great machomet syttynge vpon a barre of yren made by enchauntement, who blewe from hym so greate a wynde that these stones turned therby so swyftly that no creature could passe by them wythout death'.[30] Arthur eventually destroys the leathery idol – its liminal placing recalling the magical idol of Mahomet that guarded the shores of Spain in Higden's *Polychronicon* – and moves on to further adventures, in the

process affirming his Christian credentials and dominance over pagan idolatry, despite never encountering any Mahometans.

Later English examples explicitly associate idolatry with Mahomet. Although Mahometanism is not the primary concern of these texts, when they are examined together as part of a 1590s vogue for romance translation, they offer an insight into Mahomet's place in this rediscovered genre. John Harington's translation of Ludovico Ariosto's Italian romance epic *Orlando Furioso* (with editions in 1591 and 1607) presents 'Turks' – not Saracens – as adversaries and a ruling tyrant who when enraged 'curst he as he had bin raging mad, / Blaspheming *Tryuigant* and *Mahomet*, / And all the Gods adored in Turks profession'.[31] Later this same tyrant, King Agramant, when worshipping the Turkish 'superstition' at his altar, 'cald on Mahomet, his Idol great'.[32]

Similarly, the second part of *Gerileon of England* (1592), translated by that doyen of romance Anthony Munday from Estienne de Maisonneufve's *Plaisante et delectable histoire de Gerilon d'Angleterre*, highlights the polytheistic nature of Mahometan idolatry but does so in the typical romance context of conversion and captivity. Because Christians 'follow the right path of a farre better religion', they should treat their captives well, the hero argues, lest it appear that

> wee would permit the marriage of a Pagan with a Christian: this were but to make them veryly beleeue, that we would altogether forsake our God, and the confidence we haue hitherto reposed in him, to worship with them their false Gods, *Iupiter*, *Mahomet*, *Mercurie*, *Phoebus*, and such like idols as they reuerence as things celestiall'.[33]

There can be no mingling of pagan and Christian beliefs. The imputation of idolatry makes paganism conspicuously false and necessarily subservient to Christian monotheism, a return to the crude simplicity of earlier representations to present a polarised vision of the present.

A third example is Thomas Pope Goodwine's shortened version of Caxton's earlier *Blanchardine and Eglantine*, printed as *The most pleasaunt historye of Blanchardine* in 1595. Again, the trajectory is familiar from earlier romance models: here a Mahometan daughter, wooed and won by a Christian, lambasts her royal father Sardony and urges him to convert. She begins: 'Noble king and my redouted father, when I bethinke mee of the manyfold and greeuous offences, which you, and all wee through you, haue committed against the sacred majesty of God, in honoring that detestable and cursed Idoll Mahomet, whose duty is nothing, and power lesse […]'[34] At the conclusion to this speech, in a curious blending of forms,

she pleads that he 'with speed forsake that infernall Mahomet, and his irreligious Alcaron, and bend your deuotions to Christ, in whome there is mercy and forgiuenes'.[35] Sure enough, at the climax of the romance, King Sardony is persuaded by Christians that

> the idolatrous Mahomet was a false deceauer and of no deity, which by sundry and wonderful miracles they had founde Christ to be the true Messias and sonne of God: and therfore with all humilitie, ioyntly on their knees they entreated his maiestie, to leaue his superstitious worshipping of blockish Mahomet, and with all deuotion to acknowledge Christ to be the true God: And euen at that very instant the stony heart of this Pagan King was mollified, who forsaking his idolatrie, became a christian.[36]

'Blockish' is a particularly notable adjective in this context, signifying senseless, dull, or stupid, and affirming the physicality of the idol and the impossibility of Mahomet's divinity.

A final and particularly influential example is Richard Johnson's immensely popular *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, an English prose romance indebted to the widely read earlier verse romance *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, amongst other sources, and perhaps the pinnacle of the Anglophone reimagining of the romance tradition.[37] The text is primarily concerned with the heroics of the national saint (here originating in Coventry rather than Cappadocia) – St George – who encounters a series of Muslim 'pagans' in his adventures. Typical of the genre, as the previous examples demonstrate, is a scenario in which Sabra, the princess and heir of Egypt, falls in love with George whilst he is being lavishly entertained at the Egyptian court. Her father is warned that she intends to 'forsake her God and beleeue as the Christians doo, and likewise shee intendes to flye from her natiue Countrie'. His response is emphatic: 'Now by *Mahomet*, *Apollo*, and *Termagaunt*, three Gods we *Egiptians* commonly adore … this damned Christian shal not gaine the conquest of my daughters loue.'[38] Unwilling to compromise his own hospitality, the Egyptian king sends George to Persia where, unbeknown to him, he is to be killed.

In Persia, amongst extraordinary splendour, George arrives at the Soldan's court on the day when 'the *Persians* solemnelie sacrificed to their Gods *Mahomet*, *Apollo*, *Tirmigaunt*' which 'vnchristian Procession so mooued the impatience of the English Champion, that he tooke the ensignes and streamers whereon the *Persian* Gods were pictured, and trampled them vnder hys feete'.[39] Here George's iconoclastic passion transparently aligns him with sixteenth-century English Protestantism. Later, having escaped imprisonment, George and his fellow champions

destroy an army of Moors returning from Hungary and take prisoner Almidor 'the blacke king of Maroco'.[40] Presiding over Almidor's execution by a 'brazen Caldron fild with boyling lead and brimstone' for his 'inhumane dealing and proffered iniuries', George nevertheless acknowledges that 'mercy harboreth in a Christians hart' and offers him life on certain conditions:

> First that thou wilt forsake theyr false Gods *Termagaunt*, *Mahomet* and *Apollo*: which be but the vayne imaginations of man: and beleeue in our true and euerliuing God, vnder whose banner we Christians haue taken in hande this long warre: Secondly thou shalt giue commandement, that all thy barbarous Nations be christened in the faith of Christ: Thirdly and lastly, that thy three Kingdomes of *Barbary*, *Moroco* & *India*, sweare true alleagance to all Christian Kings, and neuer to beare Armes, but in the true quarrell of Christ and his annoynted Nations.[41]

Almidor refuses, protesting that he would 'indure a hundred deathes' before forsaking his 'countrie Gods', and is boiled in the molten metal. Immediately the local populace is converted en masse in scenes reminiscent of the conquest of Granada, which 'more delighted the English Champion, than to haue the whole worlds honour at command', and 'al the ceremonious rites of *Mahomet*' are 'trodden vnder foote' and the gospel preached.[42]

What is striking about these four English romances from the 1590s is their similarity in theme, scope and language, but inconsistency in imagining an idolatrous Mahometanism. The obvious similarities are not surprising, given the generic preoccupation with courtly love and cross-cultural encounter, the conflict between true Christian knight and largely honourable infidel, the trials of the former and the conversion of the latter. The arc of such romance narratives means that a reader's expectations are fulfilled in the conversions that follow military victory – conquest takes place on sexual, martial, territorial and theological levels, each reinforcing the other. The specific nature of the religious belief of the conquered opponent is inevitably of less consequence than the affirmation of their conversion, particularly when accompanied by the smashing of idols, which offered rich parallels with hagiographical and biblical narratives and with the iconoclasm of the English Reformation.

A lack of interest in these romances regarding the details of Mahometan belief stands in contrast to the relentless preoccupation with detail in other kinds of writing on the subject. This again reflects the different demands of romance on its writers, translators and readers, and is part of a retrenched vision of God's universe that is defined by the terminology prominently

used in the genre. The ubiquity of the word 'pagan' in these texts conjures a theological system in which Mahometanism is denied monotheistic status alongside the other 'religions of the book', or acknowledgement as a heresy, or indeed any specific identity at all – it is instead denigrated as one among many sub-Christian sects. As detailed in the *OED*, the etymology of the term pagan is revealing. Deriving from the post-classical *paganus*, the term signifies a heathen as opposed to a Christian or a Jew, a meaning probably established in the fourth century. This suggests that the term developed as a tool in the hands of the newly Christianised Roman Empire to shape the known world and the ethno-religious identities within it between the two interrelated monotheisms of Christianity and Judaism, largely dismissing everything else. Labelling Mahomet and Mahometans as 'pagan' simplifies and reduces them and, in the context of the 1590s, harks back to a reassuringly straightforward utopian ideal in which a martially unbowed and unified Christianity was fictionally dominant.

This lack of consistency in depicting the role of gods and idols in the English romances warrants closer examination. There is clearly confusion. *Orlando Furioso* posits Mahomet as a great idol and 'Turks' who worship both him and 'Tryvigant' alongside other gods. *Gerileon of England* depicts pagan Muslims worshipping a bizarre panoply of Roman and Greek gods – Jupiter, Mercury and Phoebus – alongside Mahomet and 'such like idols'. *The most pleasaunt historye of Blanchardine*, however, focusses entirely upon the idolatrous worship of Mahomet, who is explicitly paralleled with Christ, while *The Seven Champions of Christendom* does not directly mention idolatry at all, referencing superstitious Muslim devotion to Mahomet, Apollo and Termagaunt and the depiction of their images on Persian 'ensignes and streamers'. The inconsistency between these romances results from the different models presented in their respective sources. As might be expected, Mahomet appears – if not prominently – in all of them, while variations on the term 'Termagant' appear in two examples, reflecting its wider presence in English culture, where it had become a byword for a savage or violent individual – as in Hal's reference to the 'Termagant Scot' in *1 Henry IV* (5.4.114).[43] The downplaying of idolatry in the *Seven Champions* may represent a hybrid conception of Mahomet, an attempt by Johnson to accommodate the increasingly widespread recognition of an anti-idolatrous emphasis in Mahometanism with the triple idol model of the earlier *Chansons*. Particularly notable, given the overall prominence of idolatry and the inconsistency in depicting it in these

texts, is the sense they give of the multiple possibilities that existed for imagining Mahomet and his religion in late-sixteenth-century England. While there may have been a dominant, theologically and academically condoned perspective, there was nevertheless a range of combinations in play: Mahomet as prophet, as god or as idol; as one amongst many or as a Christ-like devotional lodestone; and those other gods supposedly worshipped by Mahometans might range from medieval fabrication (Termagant) to Greek and Roman deities (Phoebus and Jupiter). Given the ways in which dramatists drew heavily upon romance for both themes and detail, the notion of Saracen idolatry is an important inheritance, and is surely the primary point of origin for Greene's head of Mahomet.

Exactly who inherited notions of Mahometan idolatry appealed to, and the nature of that appeal, is the subject of some debate. Norman Daniel, in his pivotal work *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (1960), devotes an appendix to discussing the misguided imputation of idolatry to Islam. He identifies a bifurcated medieval conception of Islam between 'the unanimous opinion of well read people' – a recognition of monotheism – and what he describes as 'the requirement of a literary tradition', namely idolatry. Regarding the latter, Daniel argues that there is 'little that is similarly absurd outside the poetic tradition'.[44] It is certainly tempting to map this same dual model onto early modern English attitudes to Mahomet, and assert that there was no break at all in such a tradition – that the educated were well aware of Mahometan monotheism, while ridiculous notions that Mahomet was an idol remained the province of 'poetic' fiction, drama and the illiterate. Although the technologies of print may not have been applied so rapidly to the romance tradition exemplified in the *Chansons*, the continuity this argument requires is evident in the continuing existence of romance, which circulated across Christendom in the later sixteenth century in a variety of forms. Following this logic, it might be argued that there is little difference to be drawn between eleventh- and twelfth-century perspectives and those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet idolatry carried more complex connotations in a post-Reformation climate, in which idol worship was routinely associated with Roman Catholicism. Furthermore, the clarity of Daniel's distinction between polemic for the purposes of entertainment (focussing on idolatry) and the more vigorously 'authentic' theological animus in 'the writings of the intellectuals' is increasingly muddied in the later period as these apparently distinct models cross-fertilise one another, as in the appearance of Higden's giant

magical idol in an account that had hitherto presented a definitively monotheistic Mahomet.[45]

Daniel does acknowledge some grey area between the 'proletarian appeal' of a text like the *Conquete de Jerusalem*, with its central idol of Mahom, and the theological refutations of Riccoldo and Peter of Cluny. This 'grey area' might be found, he suggests, in crypto-idolatry, implying 'ostensible monotheism as its corollary', or as an inevitable result of the insistent paralleling of Mahomet with Jesus, leading to an assumption of the former's fabricated divinity. Both these possibilities suggest that, as Christ's 'dark double', Mahomet might pose uncomfortable questions about the nature of divinity, prophecy, scripture and belief, as he would in later periods.[46] Daniel's 'grey area' is, I would suggest, considerably more extensive than he allows, especially by the fifteenth century as texts were combined and reworked in circulation and translation. The work of Peter Burke and others has also demonstrated that Daniel's binary distinction between popular and intellectual notions of Mahomet and Mahometanism is unsustainable – the later lives themselves indicate the way in which 'intellectual' writers moved quite easily between these discourses, and the mutation of the popular tradition in Greene's drama further indicates their early modern interconnectedness.[47]

A few questions remain. If Daniel is right when he asserts that we can be 'quite sure' of the intention of 'serious writers' on Mahomet, and that we shall never know what proportion of the medieval populace 'took the notion of Saracen idolatry seriously', then what should we make of the translation of this typically romance tradition into early modern English drama?[48] Is it intended to be ridiculous, for instance? As with so many aspects of Greene's idolatry scene in *Alphonsus*, things are more complex than they seem. If post-Reformation pressures do break down any clear distinction between an intellectual approach privileging Mahometan monotheism and a populist one preoccupied with idolatry, then that breakdown takes place in the crucible of the London theatres, and in the wake of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*. Greene's *Alphonsus* is a well-placed example of such a collapse: although its idol of Mahomet clearly comes from the romance tradition I have been outlining, it is Greene's own invention and his interpolation into the historical thrust of the play. The rest of the drama is based firmly on the emulation of *Tamburlaine* and the following of dynastic chronicle material – 'intellectual writing' – so *Alphonsus* is itself a hybrid combination of earlier 'high' and 'low' traditions, the later *Selimus* even more so.[49]

II. ISLAMIC IDOLS AND STAGE MAHOMETS

It is as part of a rapidly changing dramatic scene that *Alphonsus of Arragon* and its turn to Mahometan idolatry should be seen. When Greene put pen to paper in 1587 or 1588, he was doing so in the immediate wake of the success of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, attempting – alongside George Peele, Thomas Kyd and others – to emulate Marlowe's geographical scope, his engagement with Muslim empires and potentates, his uncontainable heroes, his spectacular effects and his 'mighty line'. *Alphonsus* was probably the first of what Daniel Vitkus and Mark Hutchings have called those 'Turk plays' that followed *Tamburlaine*'s example.[50] However, it may be more useful to think of the often maligned *Alphonsus of Aragon* as Greene's attempt to respond to, rather than simply emulate, Marlowe's play, as Irving Ribner has suggested.[51] The awesome spectacle of *Tamburlaine* shifted the portrayal of Mahometanism on the early modern stage, just as it introduced the powerful, arrogant, bombastic and boastful stock figure of the 'Grand Turk' in the figure of Bajazeth. Could Greene's curious idol of Mahomet be the direct result of a new dramatic vision of Mahometanism ushered in by Marlowe?

While Mahomet and his religion are never defined as consistently as the figure of the 'Turk' in the two parts of *Tamburlaine*, the closest the play comes to suggesting idolatry is in Bajazeth's invocation of 'Ye holy priests of heavenly Mahomet, / That, sacrificing, slice and cut your flesh, / Staining his altars with your purple blood' (Pt 1, 4.2.2–4).[52] Otherwise, there is an intriguing tension between the notion of 'God and his friend Mahomet' (Pt. 2, 3.1.1) in the second part of the play and the hero's increasingly emphatic estrangement from that Mahomet whom he once 'thought a God' (Pt. 2, 5.1.173). Despite the remapping of Tamburlaine's devotional world in the second part of the play, there are clear continuities between the two parts. In both Mahomet is indelibly associated with the figure of the 'Turk', beginning a long dramatic association, while Tamburlaine stands apart from conventional hierarchies of religious devotion, claiming direct sanction as the scourge of God. When invoked by Bajazeth and Zabina in part I, Mahomet is a version of Christ from the theological and historical tradition – a once-human deity to whom one appeals for intervention in earthly affairs. Thus in the ignominy of defeat, Bajazeth pleads to 'Mahomet, O sleepy Mahomet' (Pt. 1, 3.3.269) while his wife Zabina declaims the heavens and 'cursed Mahomet' (Pt. 1, 3.3.270) and imagines Tamburlaine's catastrophic destruction of Ottoman power in heavenly terms – there is left 'no Mahomet, no God' (Pt. 1, 5.1.239). This

construction of Mahomet, in keeping with a dominant Christian scholarly tradition, also repeatedly demonstrates his absence and ineffectuality, an inability to intervene. Members of Tamburlaine's own train reflect upon this as they come across the caged Bajazeth: 'Dost thou think that Mahomet will suffer this?' one asks. 'Tis like he will, when he cannot let it', the other replies (Pt. 1, 4.4.53–4).

The question of intervention shapes the ambivalence of the broken truce in part II between the King of Natolia, Orcanes, and the Christian king, Sigismond. The two establish peace based on the precarious conceit of swearing by the authority of opposing deities – Orcanes 'By sacred Mahomet, the friend of God, / Whose holy Alcoran remains with us' (Pt. 2, 1.1.137–8) and Sigismond by 'By Him that made the world and saved my soul, / The son of God and issue of a maid, / Sweet Jesus Christ' (Pt. 2, 1.1.133–5). Once Sigismond resolves to break the truce, conveniently declaring that there can be no faith with those in whom 'no faith nor true religion rests' (Pt. 2, 2.1.34), and is comprehensively defeated, Orcanes is in the deliberately absurd position of being unable to identify which deity had given him the victory. He naively, but neatly, ties up the ambiguity by asserting that in his thoughts 'shall Christ be honoured, / Not doing Mahomet an injury, / Whose power had share in this our victory' (Pt. 2, 2.3.33–5). What was an English audience to make of this? In typically Marlovian fashion, difficult questions remain defiantly open for observers to make of them what they will. The parallels between Mahometanism and Christianity are always tantalisingly present, but never explicit, and the validity of one is never pressed over the other. Mahomet's apparently paradoxical role – he is present in the repeated invocations that echo through both parts of the play, yet is at the same time silent and absent – allows further probing questions about the role of the divine in human affairs. Is it, as the Sultan of Egypt asserts, 'God and Mahomet' (Pt. 1, 5.1.478) that have given Tamburlaine his apparently limitless power? Or is it the sword he repeatedly swears by?

One model for Tamburlaine that has been overlooked in critical scholarship emerges from these questions: Mahomet himself. The arrogant disregard for established hierarchies and systems of belief, the relentless and violently destructive military campaigns, the remarkable expansion of an Asian empire from meagre beginnings, the tension between appearing to successfully act on behalf of an vengeful God but without the legitimation of any miraculous 'proof' – all are prominent in the source material on Mahomet to which Marlowe had access.[53] Grafting such characteristics onto the existing information available on Timur newly figures

the Scythian shepherd-turned-warlord into a second warrior prophet, repeating yet avenging Mahometan advances on Christendom. From a Christian perspective, could there be any greater 'overreacher' than the false prophet Mahomet?[54]

The possibility that Marlowe may have had Mahomet in mind when creating Tamburlaine, while intriguing, does not help to explain their complex interconnection in part II. From complete disregard for the prophet in the first part, in the opening act of the second play Tamburlaine swears 'by sacred Mahomet' (Pt. 2, 1.3.109) to take the remnants of the Ottoman empire. This confusion culminates in his direct challenge to the authority of Mahomet as Babylon burns:

> In vain, I see, men worship Mahomet:
> My sword hath sent millions of Turks to hell,
> Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends,
> And yet I live untouched by Mahomet.
> (Pt 2, 5.1.177–80)

And then, once the Qur'ān and other 'superstitious books' are thrown on the pyre:

> Now, Mahomet, if thou have any power,
> Come down thyself and work a miracle.
> Thou are not worthy to be worshipped
> That suffers flames of fire to burn the writ
> Wherein the sum of thy religion rests.
> Why send'st thou not a furious whirlwind down
> To blow thy Alcoran up to thy throne
> Where men report thy sitt'st by God himself,
> Or vengeance upon the head of Tamburlaine,
> That shakes his sword against thy majesty
> And spurns the abstract of thy foolish laws?
> Well, soldiers, Mahomet remains in hell;
> He cannot hear the voice of Tamburlaine.
> Seek out another Godhead to adore …
> (Pt 2, 5.1.185–98)

As a challenge, this is based on standard Christian conceptions of Mahomet, with its emphasis on parallels with Christ, an inability to work miracles, the creation of 'foolish laws' and an assumption that Mahomet *remains* in hell. Yet there is ambiguity here, as elsewhere in the play. Tamburlaine's notion that men 'worship' Mahomet and the insistence that his soldiers seek out 'another Godhead to adore' carry idolatrous connotations, tempered only by received opinion that suggests Mahomet

sits 'by God himself' in heaven. Tamburlaine dramatises his rejection of Mahomet and Mahomet's religion and performs it directly to an early modern audience which is transformed into his Mahometan soldiers in the dynamic of the address. Once again, the play provocatively teases and disorientates with the inversion of Christianity and Mahometanism.[55]

Marlowe presents an unusual mixing of conceptual models in his vision of Mahomet. One key difference from Greene is the prominence of the Alcoran, which is completely absent in *Alphonsus of Aragon*. In Marlowe's play, rather than burn or smash idols of Mahomet, as so often occurs in romance (as in *Sir Bevis of Hampton* ll. 1159–70, *King Richard* ll. 4055–61 and *Sir Ferumbras* ll. 2564–8), Tamburlaine burns the Alcoran, an action that affirms the textual basis of Mahometanism – its foundation in sacred 'writ', and thus its proximity to Christianity, especially Protestant Christianity. It is an action which allows him to challenge all scripture and religion in an extraordinary moment. In replacing Mahomet's idol with Mahomet's holy text, Marlowe retains some of the former's associations, while the act of burning the Alcoran invokes the burning of religious texts on all sides of Reformation schism. Unlike Daborne, who would later replace the Alcoran with an idol of Mahomet's head, here Marlowe converts idol to Alcoran and makes his protagonist a conquering romance hero in the St George mould. This play – and this episode in particular – is thus a provocative and ambivalent reimagining of romance. The ambiguity surrounding this controversial challenge pushed Greene to consider a different approach; after all, in his *Perimedes the Blacksmith* of 1588, Greene had attacked Marlowe for 'daring God out of heauen with that Atheist Tamburlan'.[56]

Suggesting that the dramatic landscape Marlowe created for the two parts of *Tamburlaine* is deeply indebted to romance is not especially new. Richard Martin has argued that the play works 'in terms of the polarization between romance and tragedy', that an audience 'enters a work of romance after giving consent to those imaginative dimensions of the mode that lend to earthly achievement its sense of glory, and it is this consent that Marlowe controls in *Tamburlaine*', causing a constant reassessment of 'assumptions about the dramatic world'.[57] Others, including Helen Cooper and Arthur Ferguson, have in different ways noted Marlowe's debt to romance.[58] Little of this work addresses the issue of theology in these plays, however, and placing Tamburlaine back into a romance tradition indicates that Marlowe had a clear purpose in mind.

Without some sense of the context offered by popular contemporary texts like *Orlando Furioso*, *Gerileon of England* and *The Seven Champions*

of Christendom, Tamburlaine's theological universe seems a confused, even incoherent, mixture of classical and Mahometan reference points including Jove, Apollo, Mahomet and the Alcoran. Yet this is not Marlowe's invention – it is a wholesale importation from romance, a fictive patchwork with its own logic originally created in the absence of detailed information to conjure up a viable Mahometan devotional world. Its very incoherence serves to confirm the oft-cited absurdity of this 'lawe', a mixture which Mahomet himself supposedly created from elements of other belief systems, and which affirms the simple truths of Christianity in contrast. Marlowe takes this romance system and repositions the figure of Mahomet within it, removing (while leaving traces of) Mahomet's earlier incarnation as idol, bringing to the fore his role as an inversion of Christ and in the process making Ottoman and Christian the mirror image of one another. In this way Marlowe revises and updates the romance model of Mahomet while retaining a romance structure into which he no longer fits, playing with an audience's assumptions about the Prophet and the hero while offering no definitive answers.

These disjunctions continue until the very end: marching against Tamburlaine in a final confrontation, the King of Amasia has a vision of 'great Mahomet / Clothed in purple clouds, and on his head / A chaplet brighter than Apollo's crown' (Pt. 2, 5.2. 31–3) marching with the Ottoman army (note here Mahomet's assumption of a 'chaplet', a classical garland signalling dominion). Yet once again they fade away, leaving Tamburlaine undefeated but for the distemper that kills him. Is this Mahomet's revenge, as some recent critics have suggested?[59] I think it is a tantalising possibility, but an unlikely one. Throughout both parts of *Tamburlaine* invocations of Mahomet have proven hollow. The hero defies Mahomet, and if we consider Zabina's assertion that there is no longer any Mahomet, alongside Tamburlaine's destruction of Mahomet in the burning of the Alcoran, then Mahomet has been twice vanquished. Or rather Tamburlaine vanquishes the idea of Mahomet, because the play seems to demonstrate that Mahomet only has meaning when his followers believe in him. As both he and Callapine recognise before their final confrontation, in eradicating 'millions of Turks', Tamburlaine eradicates Mahomet. This is again a provocative point. Before it melts away, the final 'Turkish' army is 'the one host […] left to honour' the prophet. Once they have gone, Tamburlaine has no Mahometan left to conquer. His erasure of Mahomet with rhetoric, sword and fire has been so comprehensive that the last residue would appear to lie solely in him, having once believed

Mahomet to be 'a God', so the final eradication is only complete with his death.

Of the other drama that sought immediately to capitalise on *Tamburlaine*'s success – plays like *The Battle of Alcazar*, *John of Bordeaux*, the first and second parts of the anonymous (and now lost) *Tamar Cham*, *Soliman and Perseda*, *The Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek* and *The Jew of Malta* – none mount the same kind of challenge to 'scholarly' conceptions of Mahomet as *Alphonsus*, nor do any place him on the stage.[60] Although characters continue to invoke 'Mahomet', none explicitly suggest idolatry, other than Robert Greene's *Selimus* (probably written around 1590). It is a curious example because, if it is by Greene, it is again marked by the kind of experimentation regarding conceptions of Mahomet and Mahometanism that distinguishes *Alphonsus*. Selimus is one of three brothers from the ruling 'Turkish' dynasty, alongside Acomat and Corcut, and the play details the struggle for supremacy that ultimately results in Selimus's accession. *Selimus* is typical of the post-*Tamburlaine* 'Turk' plays both in its preoccupation with Ottoman dynastic matters, internecine conflict and tyrannous government and in its historical source material.

Selimus differs in the presentation of the religious beliefs of the three princes, exploring the range of possibilities available in dramatising the figure of the 'Turk' on the early modern English stage and offering three largely distinct models.[61] Selimus is an irreligious and bloodthirsty 'tyrant' (28.25), while Acomat is vicious and untamed – described as 'barbarous' and as a 'monster' (14.79, 12.83). In contrast, Corcut is a 'grave philosopher' (17.106) and a 'scholar' (17.115). Their differing portrayal is reflected in their attitudes to Mahomet and resulting conception of religion, giving a useful insight into those models used by English writers at the end of the sixteenth century. Selimus fits more readily into the Tamburlaine mould: he denies the authority of any deity, and specifically those deities traditionally associated with Mahometanism in romance, whether 'Mars or Minerva, Mahound, Termagent' (6.20). Acomat, however, seeks repeatedly to justify his savage actions by the authority of 'the holy Prophet Mahomet, / Chief president and patron of the Turks' (10.16–17) and his 'holy rites […] wondrous tomb and sacred Alcoran' (12.19–20).

Identifying Mahomet explicitly as 'president' and 'patron' of the 'Turks' develops the 'Turkification' of the prophet further; here, Acomat uses the invocation of that authority as a prelude and justification for slaughter. His vision of Mahomet differs markedly from the polytheistic pantheon dismissively listed by Selimus. Corcut, again in contrast, spends

his time 'In learning arts and Mahound's dreaded laws' (1.81) – the use of the medieval 'Mahound' (as in *Alphonsus*) is another indication of the reintegration of earlier romance terminology into late-sixteenth-century dramatic representations. It is therefore unexpected when Corcut, in his few onstage moments and unlike his brothers, never mentions Mahomet/Mahound at all. Instead he converts to Christianity at the conclusion of the play, warning Selimus of the dire consequences of his actions and commending his own soul to the 'God of Christians' (22.84) before his execution. It is certainly no coincidence that the civilised Corcut – despite his study of Mahomet's 'dreaded laws' – never calls upon Mahomet and ultimately converts. In English writing the absence of Mahomet seems a necessary precondition for the conversion of the 'Turk', and Corcut is far from unique in this respect.

Although *Tamburlaine*'s success created a stock 'Turk' figure whose devotion to Mahomet was absolute and repeatedly expressed, the development of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship in the 1580s and 1590s generated a more ambivalent model that is epitomised in the Ottoman prince Corcut. Other examples include the benevolent Ottoman prince Selim-Calymath sent to procure tribute in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, the judge prevailed upon in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* and the regularly lauded Amurath 'God of Kings' (1.1.88) in the background of Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*. What binds these disparate characters together with Greene's Corcut is not a proto-Christianity or even necessarily Christian sympathy, but rather an absence of Mahomet. This is surprising, given that in 'Turk plays' of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre the figure of the 'Turk' – usually epitomised in the 'Grand Turk' himself – defines his faith through reference to Mahomet. In *Soliman and Perseda* the Ottoman prince Amurath swears 'by Mahomet' (1.5.68) to hazard his duty; in Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* Voada vows 'By our great Prophet Mahomet' (16.251); in Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* Mustapha exclaims 'by Mahomet' (3.5.79). In the great religious cycles of medieval drama a character's moral alignment is defined in part by his or her enthusiasm for swearing by the figure of 'Mahoun', regardless of their ostensible religious persuasion.[62]

Similarly, the conversion of Christians to Mahometanism is undertaken with explicit reference to Mahomet. The scene in Daborne's play involving the head of Mahomet has already been discussed, but later Rabshake ridicules Ward (who has supposedly been converted), laughing 'Poor fellow, how hee lookes since Mahomet had the handling of him' (13.52–3). Basilisco in *Soliman and Perseda* proudly talks of how, in his

own conversion ritual, the 'Turkes' did 'prop me with their shoulders, / And in procession bare me to the Church, / As I had beene a second Mahomet' (4.2.13–15), and Brusor boasts that he has 'led a valiant troop of Turkes, / And made some Christians kneele to Mahomet' (1.3.60–1). The commonplace nature of this invocation is reflected in its offhand use in a very different context – so in Thomas Middleton's *Revengers Tragedy* (1607) Vindici remarks upon how one might turn a woman from chastity, because 'Many a Maide has turn'd to Mahomet, / With easier working' (2.1.308). The repeated summoning of Mahomet works only on the assumption that he occupies a Christ-like position in Mahometan theology, so his prominence in oaths and his presence in conversion exactly mirror Christian invocations of Christ. Mahomet and his religion are once more imagined to be the dark double of Jesus and Christianity. Indeed, the way in which these plays seek to demonise a certain kind of conversion depends upon that inversion.

'Turks' were expected to swear by Mahomet. Doing so defines their ethno-religious identity as much as their 'tulipans' and 'mustachios' and indicates their opposition to Christ, signalling a set of characteristics associated with Mahomet himself. For English dramatists Mahomet occupied the very heart of Mahometanism, as prophet, idol, God and author of scripture, so when a 'Turk' does not refer to him at all, he/she defies expectations and steps outside of faith into a space of non-belief.[63] In costume such figures are still recognisably 'Turks' and yet are no longer defined by religion.[64] Dropping Mahomet presents a series of satirical possibilities and the chance to reflect on contemporary political and religious issues, and the few examples that exist belong to a very specific Elizabethan period of intense Anglo-Ottoman interaction.[65]

The Anglo-Ottoman Capitulations (published by Hakluyt in 1589) offer a pivotally important precedent for Mahomet-free 'Turks' on the stage. In carefully editing this document that benevolently proffers Murad III's protection, as Susan Skilliter has recognised, Hakluyt ensures all reference to Mahomet is excised.[66] Clearly the purpose is to highlight what A. L. Horniker terms 'a religious identity between Protestantism and Islam' and to downplay divisively alien elements of the 'holy faith' of the 'Turks' for public consumption.[67] It may be that Hakluyt was reacting against powerful opponents to the relationship. John Aylmer, Bishop of London, had written in 1582 imploring the Lord Mayor to 'staye such entercourse with Infidells, and saue the soules of o^{r} people from the Gulphe of Mahomet'.[68] Hakluyt's reproduction of the Capitulations demonstrates that the demonising strategies for representing Mahomet that dominated

English writing in this period could, if it were politically expedient, be broken down in favour of an emphasis on cooperation and commonality. Sympathetic characterisation was only possible, however, if it involved the expulsion of Mahomet. In the few examples from Wilson, Marlowe and Peele cited earlier in the chapter, removing the prophet opened up new possibilities. At a point when popular hostility to Spain and the papacy was at its height, and the commercial fruits of the Anglo-Ottoman alliance were beginning to appear on the streets of the capital, it is not surprising that Hakluyt's selective redefinition tentatively percolated into London's dramatic spectacles.[69] This was an entirely new and curious proposition – a Mahometan without Mahomet.

If the erasure of Mahomet from the vocabulary of certain stage 'Turks' indicates a popular engagement with the conciliatory dynamics of the Anglo-Ottoman Capitulations, what might an audience expect from its opposite, a dramatic address to Mahomet himself? Following Tamburlaine's lead, and aside from the curious example of *Alphonsus*, there are three examples of this kind of directed speech. Two are challenges in the Tamburlaine mould, and all are similarly directed heavenward, calling upon Mahomet as a celestial mediator in a Christ-like role. Whether done for dark purposes or in desperation, engaging a deity (Christian or otherwise) to intervene in human affairs was a classical legacy not uncommon on the early modern stage.

The first of these examples, never actually intended for the stage but written more as a philosophical exercise, is Fulke Greville's Senecan closet drama *Mustapha* (printed in 1609). Greville plays upon certain dominant assumptions about Mahomet to articulate a wider scepticism about the uses of religion and to consider the nature of tyranny – themes which run through the play. So, in a conspicuous turn away from the idolatrous Mahomet of *Alphonsus*, a chorus of Mahometan 'priests' acknowledge that 'though we make not idols, yet we fashion / God, as if from Power's throne He tooke his being'.[70] As in *Tamburlaine*, the contradictory position of Mahometanism in relation to Christianity – it is both closely related and opposite – means it can function as a kind of proxy through which to pose questions about belief and non-belief. One of these 'priests' later takes the stage and begins to lament in soliloquy:

> False *Mahomet*, thy lawes Monarchall are,
> Vniust, ambitious, full of spoile and blood,
> Hauing not of the best but greatest care
> To whome still thou dost sacrifice thy good.
> Must life yeeld vp it selfe to be put out,

> Before this frame of nature be denied?
> Must blood the tribute be of princes doubt?
> O wretched flesh in which must be obaid,
> Gods lawes, that wills impossibilities:
> And princes willes, which worke in crueltie,
> With faith (an art borne of false Prophets word)
> Wee blind our selues [...] (3.5.1–12)

Not as confrontational as Tamburlaine's invective, this speech is nonetheless another direct challenge to Mahomet's heavenly authority. Tamburlaine had ridiculed Mahomet's 'foolish laws': here Greville's Mahometan priest derides the 'false' prophet's 'Monarchall' laws as 'Vnjust, ambitious, full of spoile and blood' – all factors prominent in the life circulating in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Unlike Marlowe's protagonist, whose performance asserts that if Mahomet exists at all, he 'remains in hell' (5.1.197), here there is a contradictory sense of a conspicuously mortal Mahomet whose falsity is repeatedly asserted even as he in being implored as an omnipresent deity by one of his own priests.

Even more striking in this speech is the identification of Mahomet as a princely legislator, hence his 'monarchall' laws and his use as a synecdoche for all tyrannical princes and their 'crueltie'. Given the play's revision in 1607–8, there is a clear intent to criticise James I with this strategy.[71] However, Greville goes further in the following lines to use his priest's invocation of Mahomet to generate questions about the purpose and nature of 'Gods lawes'; thus 'With faith' – which is of course 'an art borne of false Prophets word' – 'Wee blind our selues.' Casting doubt on the efficacy and purpose of faith has an equivalent in Tamburlaine's final, ambivalent 'The God that sits in heaven, if any god, / For he is God alone, and none but he' (5.1.200–1). With a rhetorical sleight of hand each writer has placed the polemical Christian imperative to disprove Mahomet's divinity in a Muslim setting, using an 'irreligious religion' to interrogate faith and the absence of God – albeit with the necessary caveat that the Christian God remains inviolable. Such strategies would, in the later seventeenth century, develop into the 'atheistic' questioning of the early Enlightenment.

Similar, if less ambiguous, is the address to heavenly Mahomet that appears in Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (probably written in 1623–4). Donusa is an Ottoman princess who falls in love with Vitelli, a disguised Venetian gentleman – as this single line summary demonstrates, romance motifs feature prominently. Attempting to convert him to Mahometanism, she is herself converted, in a scene that entails the sudden and wholesale

rejection of the 'juggling' Mahomet (4.3.115). Sickened at the very prospect of conversion, the steadfast Vitelli rehearses the standard details of the Christian life:

> I will not foul my mouth to speak the sorceries
> Of your seducer, his base birth, his whoredoms,
> His strange impostures; nor deliver how
> He taught a pigeon to feed in his ear,
> Then made his credulous followers believe
> It was an angel that instructed him
> In the framing of his Alcoran. (4.3.125–31)

The acting out of an oft-fantasised confrontation with an actual Mahometan believer – as played out by Coryat in Multan – in which the 'truth' about the false Mahomet is revealed has the desired result: Donusa 'perceives a yielding' (4.3.148), resolves to contemptuously 'spit at Mahomet' (4.3.158) and becomes a Christian. As Jonathan Burton notes, the princess 'is thus transformed from a dangerous Muslim temptress to a happy Christian wife'.[72]

However, as a consequence of Donusa's conversion, both she and Vitelli are confined to Asambeg's palace in Tunis. There she rails at male sexual hypocrisy that is apparently sanctioned by religion:

> Indulgent *Mahomet*, doe thy bloody lawes
> Call my embraces with a Christian, death?
> Having my heat and May of youth to plead
> In my excuse? and yet want power to punish
> These that with scorn break through thy Cobweb edicts
> And laugh at thy decrees? To tame their lusts
> There's no religious bit: let her be fair
> And pleasing to the eye, though Persian, Moor,
> Idolatress, Turk, or Christian, you are privileged
> And freely may enioy her. (4.2.128–37)

In this case the focus of the address shifts to Mahomet's lustful indulgences and thus to his edicts' allowance of any male sexual proclivity. Yet there is also a general laxity in observing Mahomet's religious laws. An impression is given that Mahomet's power – his 'cobweb edicts' – is not only lacking in substance, but is easily ignored, as Tamburlaine seeks to demonstrate in his own declamation. As in earlier examples an audience is reminded of the straightjacket of Mahomet's 'lawes', the 'decrees' that are paralleled with Anglican religious codes. This relationship also offers Massinger an opportunity to comment satirically on the equivalent gender imbalances in contemporary British culture.

One theatrical speech delivered directly to Mahomet remains, and it is quite distinct from these examples and from the influence of *Tamburlaine* part II. Not a direct challenge, but rather a genuflection before Mahomet, it features in John Mason's tragedy *The Turke* (1610). Here the 'Turke' of the title, the Machiavellian Mulleases, soliloquises upon his plans:

> Eternall substitute to the first that mou'd
> And gaue the Chaos forme. Thou at whose nod
> Whole Nations stoopt, and hold thee still a God:
> Whose holy-customd-ceremonious rites,
> Liue vnprophan'd in our posterity:
> Thou God of *Mecha*, mighty *Mahomet*,
> Thus *Mulleasses* at thy memory
> Discends: accept his prone humility,
> Great Prophet: let thy influence be free
> Vncheckt by danger: mew not vp my soule,
> In the pent roome of conscience:
> Make me not morall *Mahomet*, coopt vp
> And fettred in the fooles phylosophy,
> That points our actions vnto honesty.
> Giue my plots fortune: let my hope but touch
> The marke I aime at: then the gazing time
> Shall in the present hide my former ill
> Successe like *Iethe* to the soules in blisse
> Makes men forget things past and crownes our sins
> With name of valour, be we impious.
> A *Scelus felix* styles vs vertuous. (2.1.1–21)

Ostensibly a straightforward appeal to an alternative deity – this could be Satan, for instance – to sanction and further his immoral plots, this speech also indicates a Tamburlaine-like confusion concerning Mahomet's status. Once more he is positioned as the inverse of Christ, a 'Great Prophet' whose indifference to morality and honesty, the 'fooles phylosophy', recalls his position as God of the villains in the medieval religious cycles. Yet he is both the 'Eternall substitute' to God and the mighty 'God of Mecha' himself, as if there remained no clear sense of how Muslims envisaged the relationship between the two. We are also reminded of his power. Mulleasses is a 'Turke' stalking a Christian court, but the play continually prompts its audience to recall those 'Whole Nations' already 'stoopt' to Mahomet.

There is another context to this speech. Claire Jowitt has argued that *The Turke*, like Greville's *Mustapha*, represents an absolutism that is 'politically ambiguous' and can be seen as 'a hostile allegory of the policies

of James I'.[73] Jowitt's analysis of Mason's politics in this play focuses primarily on its engagement with James's foreign policy, yet Mulleasses's speech to Mahomet suggests a satirical take on James's religious settlement. Midway through his address and alone on the stage, this 'Turke' offers his own devotion to his deity, this 'God of *Mecha*'. 'Thus', in honour of Mahomet's memory Mulleasses 'Discends', asking him to 'accept his prone humility'. This suggestion that he kneels at this point might seem an innocuous attempt at authenticity on Mason's part, but to kneel in devotional penitence on the stage was a gesture charged with significance in 1610. Controversy had raged in the early Jacobean church regarding the proper position to receive communion from as early as 1604 and would rumble on in text and from pulpit for more than twenty years – between 1618 and 1625 in Scotland alone 'at least thirty ministers were warded (confined), suspended, or deposed […] for failing to enforce kneeling at communion'.[74]

A divisive conflict that centred upon the nature of the early Christian church, the issue of devotional kneeling cut to the heart of Anglican Protestantism. Charles Prior has identified the opposing sides as Reformists and Conformists:

> Reformists firmly maintained that there could be no separation of doctrine and practice, and hence that sitting at communion was a divinely established point of doctrine that had to be preserved. Conformists sought to locate the Church of England within the broader history of free churches, whose right it was to establish modes of worship.[75]

That Mulleasses descends in 'memory' of Mahomet is also reminiscent of the significance of taking bread and wine in memory of Christ in Christian communion. This genuflection to Mahomet represents an infernal communion. Aligning conformist practice with the invocation of Mahomet for immoral and Machiavellian ends polemically makes Jacobean orthodoxy – and the religious policy of the king himself – not only alien to England and to true Christianity, but irredeemably Mahometan. This is only enhanced when, later in the play, Mulleasses is himself called Mahomet. Reacting to his sexual advances, Julia replies 'If thou beest gentle leave me Mahomet, / Our loves like our religions are at war' (5.3.41–2). Burton has recognised that here Julia transforms the 'Turke' in line with 'European accounts of the Prophet Muhammad as a lecherous charlatan'.[76] This was a common device in drama (it also appears in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* and in Marston's *The Insatiate Countess*, for instance) and had been used in the early Reformation

debates. So the dominant pre-Reformation characteristics associated with Mahomet coexist with and reinforce contemporary satirical parallels.

In both *Mustapha* and *The Turke*, James I's authority and policies had been satirically connected with the tyrannous immorality of Mahomet, yet there were other, less public contexts in which the king might be tainted by the same association. In 1606, James and his court welcomed his brother-in-law, King Christian IV of Denmark, with an array of celebratory excesses. Sir John Harington wrote of the occasion, 'I have been well nigh overwhelmed with carousal and sports of all kinds. The sports began each day in such manner and such sort, as well nigh persuaded me of Mahomet's paradise.' He explains: 'We had women, and indeed wine too, of such plenty, as would have astonished each sober beholder'.[77] Such was the excess that sober Protestant England and its royal court had been transformed into the carnal realm of 'beastly delights' Mahomet had apparently promised his followers. Shocked, Harington hankered after the certainties of Elizabeth's reign. It was 'as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself, by wild riot, excess, and devastation of time and temperance'.[78] The Christian myth of Mahomet's fleshly Elysium had been made real, the stage was England and James was directing the action.

III. MAHOMET, MORTUS ALI AND THE POPE

Invoking or addressing Mahomet on the early modern English stage was never entirely what it seemed to be. Whether minor exclamation or substantial acclamation, there was always a subtext at such moments: Mahomet functioned as a surrogate around whom potential meanings coalesced. That he is absent in all but Greene's *Alphonsus* and Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turke* only increases the satirical and subversive possibilities. Even his total erasure is significant. The bombast and tyranny of a raging 'Grand Turk' might encourage reflection on such tyranny closer to home. Alternatively the absence of such invocations marks a 'Turk' as something different, as a proto-Christian or as a means against which to exaggerate Catholic and Jewish depravity. The direct and sustained devotional address is an extension of this – always satirical, unsettling an audience's assumptions about the dominant narratives of their own culture. Such moments are charged with significance. Consequently, and despite it being at odds with subsequent conceptions of Mahomet, one might expect to find a satirical intent in the very different engagement with Mahomet that takes place in *Alphonsus of Arragon*.

In *Tamburlaine*'s two parts Marlowe had provocatively refigured the tropes of romance for the stage. It was in response to Marlowe's success and the dangerously 'atheist' possibilities it opened up that Greene recalibrated this dramatic engagement with romance to recreate Marlowe's Mahomet as an idol. Greene's multiple attempts to follow *Tamburlaine* did not meet with the acclamation he had hoped for: while *Alphonsus* saw later revivals and gained certain notoriety, the projected second part of his *Selimus* never materialised. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how and why 'Mahomet's Poo' gained the iconic status that placed it alongside Charlemagne, Tamburlaine and Peele's own Tom Stukeley in that author's 'A Farewell' in 1589.[79] Certainly Greene's idol of Mahomet stands out in such company – while three of the four are non-English and each represents martial prowess (apposite for the subject material), the idol hardly qualifies as heroic in the same way. Given that not a single contemporary or subsequent dramatist seems to have followed Greene's decision to translate Mahometan idolatry wholesale from romance to the stage (not even Greene himself repeated the experiment), it may have been the idol's absurdity that gained it a place in the popular pantheon Peele had assembled in 'A Farewell'. Reading Mahomet as an idol in texts that knowingly sought to recreate romance was one thing; translating an antiquated conception of Mahomet onto the stage, in defiance of the widely accepted model of Mahomet as mortal prophet (and in opposition to *Tamburlaine*) was something quite different.

Yet Greene was writing *Alphonsus* during a spike of hostility in the level of popular anti-papal prejudice, perhaps just before, or just after, the Armada of 1588. In such a context the presentation of a talking idol on the stage – a self-confessed intermediary between man and the heavens – cannot have avoided a connection with Roman Catholicism. Greene actually encourages it in his staging of the play. Two scenes before the audience with Mahomet, the Ottoman ruler Amurack is bewitched and sent to sleep by the enchantress Medea, accompanied by his Amazon wife Fausta and their daughter Iphigina. Following 'ceremonies belonging to conjuring' designed to allow them to see into the future, Medea summons Colchas from his grave, who rises up from beneath the stage costumed 'in a white surplice and a Cardinall's mitre' (s.d. ll. 951–2) – reminiscent of Mephistopheles' appearance as a monk in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*. She then sends him 'hence to Pluto back again' to 'there enquire of the Destinies' (ll. 960–1). These elements again fit a classical schema in which the oracle of Mahomet might be comfortably placed – Calchas was an Argive soothsayer who prophesied that Agamemnon

(here transformed into Amurack) would have to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia (clearly Greene's Iphigina) for wind to transport his becalmed Greek fleet to Troy.[80] Recreating Calchas as a conspicuously Catholic ghost summoned in Ottoman Constantinople just before an idol of Mahomet prophesies on the stage compresses Roman Catholicism, classical paganism and Mahometanism into a satirical composite designed to assert the absurdity of all three and the opposing truth of Protestantism. In this reading Greene's idol becomes an exaggerated version of a saintly icon in the Roman Catholic tradition – at once a romance figure, a classical figure and a Catholic Mahometan figure.

The unique versatility of Mahomet for early modern English playwrights extends beyond Greene's vision of Mahomet as idol in new directions and into different contexts. Although neither Greene in his *Alphonsus* or *Selimus* nor Marlowe in the two parts of *Tamburlaine* acknowledge it, detailed information concerning sectarian division within Mahometanism was becoming available to English readers by the end of the sixteenth century. That a majority of those writing for the stage in this period chose to follow Marlowe's example and ignore it suggests a conceptual investment in maintaining Mahomet as the sole and unchallenged deity revered by Mahometans across the world and the body of Christian mythology that supported it. A monotheism united around Mahomet might be both more terrifying and more easily disproved. However, a number of dramatists in the seventeenth century chose to depart from this paradigm, finding in Mahometan schism a means to reflect upon post-Reformation Christian division and a new adversary for Mahomet: Mortus Ali.[81]

From the late fifteenth century the 'Turk' had been the pre-eminent Mahometan for the English – hence the ubiquity of 'turning Turk' to signal conversion. Despite this dominance, even some of the earliest printed sources in English acknowledge the existence of competing national entities within Mahometanism, even if they are only vaguely conceived and focus upon the regal figures of the 'Soldan' of Egypt or the 'Sophy' of Persia in opposition to, or in alliance with, the 'Grand Turk'.[82] Emerging notions of religious divergence within Mahometanism in the late sixteenth century are then mapped directly onto these national groups, indicating the imposition of an English model for the relationship between church and state that had only limited relevance. So 'Turks' and 'Persians' become opposing religious as well as national groupings, echoing the opposition between Mahomet and Mortus Ali.[83]

The well-travelled Anthony Jenkinson had written a first-hand account of Persia having reached it through Russia in 1562 to negotiate

trading agreements, but although he records having 'reasoned […] much of religion' with the Sophy himself, Jenkinson makes only the vaguest mention of religious specifics.[84] As with much new English material on Persia, extracts of Jenkinson's account were first published in Richard Willes's collection of travel narratives, *The history of trauayle in the VVest and East Indies, and other countreys lying eyther way, towardes the fruitfull and ryche Moluccaes* (1577), an extension of Richard Eden's earlier *Decades of the newe worlde* (1555) which was itself a translation of Pietro Martine d'Anghiera's *De orbe novo*.[85] In the published version of his account later reproduced by Richard Hakluyt, Jenkinson writes that

> though these Persians bee Mahometans, as the Turkes and Tartars bee, yet honour they this false fained *Murtezallie*, saying that he was the chief disciple that Mahomet had […] for which cause and other differences of holy men and lawes, they have had and have with the Turkes and Tartares mortall warres. To intreat of their religion at large, being more or lesse, Mahomets lawe and the Alcoran, I shall not need at this present.[86]

For Jenkinson, disputes over prophetic lineage distinguish Persian from Turkish or Tartararian Mahometanism, yet – perhaps because it was unnecessary in a mercantile context, or because he did not fully understand the nature of their differing 'lawes' – he offers no further detail. Yet the Persians' reverence for the 'false fained *Murtezallie*' is central, and immediately this mysteriously named figure is cast as a second Mahomet, castigated in much the same language of falsity that had been routinely applied to his predecessor in Christian writings.[87]

Alongside Jenkinson's account in Willes's influential text, more detailed information about Persian belief emerges in a later account of Persia given to Willes by 'Geferie Ducate', a merchant adventurer whose 1568 voyage followed the trail blazed by Jenkinson. Of the religion of the Persians, Ducate writes:

> Theyr religion is all one with the Turkes, sauyng that they dyffer who was the ryght successor of *Mahumet*. The Turkes saye that it was one *Homer* and his sonne *Vsman*. But the *Persians* saye, that it was one *Mortus Ali,* whiche they woulde proue in this maner. They say there was a counsayle called to decide the matter who shoulde be the successour: and after they had called vppon *Mahumet* to reuele vnto them his wyll and pleasure therein, there came among them a litle lizarde, who declared that it was *Mahumetes* pleasure that *Mortus Ali* should be his successour. This *Martus Ali* was a valiant man, and slewe *Homer* the Turkes prophet: He had a swoorde that he fought withall, with the whiche he conquered all his enimies, and kylled as many as he stroake.[88]

In the margin adjacent to this section someone – presumably Willes – cannot resist a sly sarcastic aside on this method of selection, and writes 'A goodly and well grounded religion'. This same marginal comment recurs exactly in Richard Hakluyt's later reproduction of Ducate's account, and the longevity of both this and Jenkinson's first-person accounts indicates their influence.[89] There is a certain relish taken here in the relation of the confusion and internecine conflict that followed Mahomet's death, and in the apparent absurdity of a lizard's prophetic involvement in the choice of his successor. This narrative is constructed both to confirm what Eden's readers already knew about Mahomet and Mahometanism and to extend that obloquy to his successors.

Unlike Jenkinson's brief account of him, Mortus – or Martus – Ali is portrayed by Ducate in martial heroic terms, although prowess in battle and a determination to spread religion through violence was another characteristic attributed to Mahomet and a means to deny him divinity. The animal mythology associated with Mahometanism is also never far away – Ducate goes on to write that upon Mortus Ali's death, a holy man instructed the Persians that 'there woulde come a whyte Camell, vppon the which he charged them to lay the body and swoorde of *Mortus Ali*' and when this occurred the camel carried him to the sea, and 'goyng a good way into the sea, was with the swoorde and bodye of *Mortus Ali* taken vp into heauen, for whose returne they haue long looked for in *Persia*'.[90] For this reason the Persian king 'alwayes keepeth a horse redye sadled for hym, and also of late kepte for hym one of his owne daughters to be his wyfe' but, Ducate adds, 'she dyed in the yeere of our Lorde .1573'. This leads to the tantalising suggestion that 'yf he come not shortly, they shalbe of our beleefe'.[91] Once again, this apparent readiness to turn to Protestantism once their religion was demonstrated to be false was regularly asserted of the 'Turks', and this was an evangelical fantasy repeatedly played out in romance narratives and popular drama. In the hands of John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins it would offer a twist to the end of their *Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607).

The model of disputed prophetic lineage mapped onto contemporary Ottoman/Safavid conflict propounded by Jenkinson and Ducate was by no means the only one circulating in late-sixteenth-century England. One landmark text that asserted very different origins to contemporary Islamic schism was Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi's *The History of the Warres Betweene the Turkes and the Persians*. Minadoi's first-hand experience of seven years' travelling in Ottoman domains does not seem to have tempered his attitudes to Mahomet.[92] He begins by recounting a

particularly vicious version of the life of this 'filthy and leacherous wretch' who intended 'vnder the colour of a diuine Oracle to satisfy his beastly lustes'.[93] After relating Mahomet's death, Minadoi goes on to detail the dispute in succession between the appointed successor 'Abubacher' and Mahomet's martyred son-in-law 'Aly' who was 'a man more worthy, for his neerenesse in bloud, for his agility in body, & for his valour in Armes'.[94]

Unlike both Jenkinson and Ducate, however, Minadoi does not find the origins of either the Persians or the Ottoman/ Safavid conflict in this dispute. He argues that for centuries, 'although the East was diuided into diuers and sondry States and Gouernementes of many persons', the 'superstition of *Mahamet*, was with all conformity mainetained' and 'neither was there heard either of any schisme, or insurrection, or waighty dissention'.[95] Then 'euen on a sudden' there emerged a schismatic named 'Siec [Sheikh?] Giunet' who

> vnder the name of *Sofi* and of *Siec*, (that is to say, of a wiseman & an author of Religion,) or rather, vnder the pretence of holynesse began to persuade the people, being by nature inconstant & superstitious. That those three first Successors of *Mahamet,* were vniust and vnlawfull vsurpers of the dignitie, That modest & iust *Ali* onely ought to be named the lawfull Successor. That he alone ought to be called-vpon in their prayers for helpe, and that by all possible meanes all honors should be yeelded and rendred to him, and taken from those three first, as from persons that were vndoubtedly damned and altogether reprobate. With many argumentes did *Giunet* approoue his Inuention, & at last persuaded many therevnto that beganne very readily to follow him as the head and founder of so new a verity.[96]

The credulous masses of the eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf rarely emerge well from these accounts. They appear to get the religion they deserve. Minadoi had earlier suggested that Mahomet had thrived thanks to the 'fickle & miserable nation' in which he planted his faith.[97] Here the Persians are 'by nature inconstant & superstitious'. This 'Siec Giunet' is thus like Aly, a lesser Mahomet; simply another kind of cynical heretical 'juggler'. Like Mahomet, he cultivated 'a pretence of holynesse' and his version of an already debased faith is just another layer of 'inuention'. Once schism in Mahometanism is identified, it seems that only Mahomets can prosper and proliferate.

Minadoi's explanation of the origins of Persian Mahometanism occupies only a fraction of his larger work, yet is evidently more detailed and more accurate than those hitherto available in English, despite his adherence to an aggressively opprobrious model of Mahomet and his

religion. That *The History of the Warres* had almost no influence beyond a small scholarly sphere is thus surprising. Minadoi's attempt to assert the authenticity of Aly over the bizarre Mortus Ali does not seem to have had any impact on the popular sphere, for instance, given that the authors of the *Travels of the Three English Brothers* repeatedly use the latter in their supposedly authentic portrayal of Persia.[98] Thomas Nashe pondered the name is his own inimitable fashion in *Lenten Stuff* (1599), probably drawing directly from Ducate:

> no more woulde you of the Ismael Persians Haly or *Mortus Alli*, they worship, whose true etymologie is, *mortum halec*, a dead red herring, and no other, though by corruption of speech, they false dialect and misse-sound it. Let any Persian oppugne this, and in spite of his hairie tuft or loue-locke he leaues on the top of his crowne, to be pulld vp or pullied vp to heauen by, Ile set my feet to his, & fight it out with him, that their fopperly god is not so good as a red Herring.[99]

As always with Nashe, there is a density of reference. In keeping with the satirical conceit of *Lenten Stuff* – a text written from exile in Great Yarmouth in praise of the local red herring – his focus is on both the etymological and metaphorical connotations of that particular fish. It is a short step from the obscure *halec* or *alec*, meaning pickled fish, to the assertion that Mortus Ali was as good as a red herring and thus (like Mahomet) had faked divinity. Samuel Chew suggests Nashe's Persians are 'Ismael' in reference to Ismail, 'the seventh Imam who initiated what is known as the Isma'ili movement which strongly influenced the development of the Shi'a', yet given the sources available, McKerrow's suggestion that it refers to Ishmael, popularly acknowledged to be the progenitor of all Muslims, seems more likely.[100] Nashe's reference to a distinctly Persian fashion for retaining a single tuft of hair 'that thereby they may easlyer be caryed vp into heauen, when they are dead' is much more straightforward – it too comes straight from Ducate's account.[101]

Nashe's opening suggests that Mortus Ali was not so well known that he could avoid a little exposition – elsewhere in *Lenten Stuff* he refers to Mahomet without the same caution. Yet one thing that Nashe could depend on was a public awareness that the 'Turks' and the Persians were implacable enemies. In a slightly earlier text, the last in his literary spat with Gabriel Harvey, *Have With You to Saffron-Walden* (1596), he remarks that '*Haruey* and I (a couple of beggers) take vpon vs to bandie factions […] as the *Turkes* and *Persians* about *Mahomet* and *Mortus Alli*, which should bee the greatest'.[102] This national as well as religious opposition appears repeatedly in English and wider Christian writing of the late

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – John Pory's translation of Leo Africanus's *A Geographical Historie of Africa* (1600) observes that 'you shall find but two principall sects onely, the one of *Leshari* being dispersed ouer all Africa, Egypt, Syria, Arabia, and Turkie: the other of *Imamia*, which is authorized throughout the whole kingdome of Persia'.[103] Many gloried in this division, expecting to find in the Persians a dependable eastern ally against the Ottomans, and emphasised its intractability. Some, seeking to explain its national/religious character and to make a polemical point, went further, mapping Christian onto Mahometan schism. A text produced the year before Pory's translation, George Abbot's *A Brief Description of the Whole World*, notes:

> The Persians are all at this day Sarazens in religion, beleeuing on *Mahomet*: but as Papists and Protestants do differ in opinion concerning the same Christ: so do the *Turkes* and *Persians* about their *Mahomet*: the one pursuing the other as heretikes with most deadly hatred. Insomuch, that there be in this respect, almost continuall warres betweene the *Turkes*, and the *Persians*.[104]

In his *Pilgrimage* Samuel Purchas was of the same opinion, asserting that the Turks hate the Persians 'more than they hate the Christians: like as the Traditionarie Iew doth the Textuarie, and the Papist the Protestant'.[105]

Both Abbot and Purchas carefully and deliberately parallel Catholic opposition to Protestant with 'Turkish' opposition to Persia, so the 'Turk' is conflated with the Catholic and the Persian with the Protestant – as Anthony Parr has observed in relation to nineteenth-century drama, Anglican English authors might 'find an analogy between 'Ali's messianic inheritance and the Christian ministry'.[106] Minadoi's correction of Paulus Giovio (whose influential *Commentario de le cose de' Turchi* was translated into English in 1546) indicates a very different investment in this parallel on the part of the Italian author.[107] Minadoi writes that Giovio 'hath erred, where he writeth that the superstition of the *Persians* did begin in *Persia* at the very same tyme, that the heresy of *Luther* was sowen in *Germany*'.[108] By erroneously identifying the rise of Persian Mahometanism with the emergence of Lutheranism, Giovio demonises them both as illegitimate schisms, in the same way earlier generations of Christian scholars had sought to correlate the birth of Mahomet with the biblical number of the beast, 666.[109]

The two early seventeenth-century plays that engage with Persia, Mortus Ali and their relationship to Mahomet also identify Shia Islam with Protestant England, although in very different ways. William Percy introduces 'Haly' into the climactic final scene of his manuscript play *Mahomet*

and His Heaven (1601) to effect religious reconciliation, whereas in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* Day, Rowley and Wilkins perform a complex elision of English Protestantism and Persia to promote a peculiarly Jacobean projection of English nationalism and imperial ambition.

Percy's play never fully delivers the promise of its title, because Mahomet (and his heaven – here styled as Olympus) is confined to the framing narrative. Probably written initially for the private entertainment of his brother Henry Percy, the 'Wizard' Ninth Earl of Northumberland, whose interests in alchemy and astrology are gently ridiculed in the figure of 'Geber', Percy's portrayal of Mahomet is radically different from the one presented by Greene in *Alphonsus* a little more than a decade earlier. In this play the flirtation with clearly antiquated notions of Muslim idolatry remains ('maumets' alongside Roman Catholic saints are called upon in prayer, for instance), but Mahomet himself is again positioned as the inversion of Christ – here with the specific intention of invoking Christ, whose dramatic portrayal had been vigorously censored by Protestant authorities from the 1570s onwards.[110] The play's fairly intricate plotting loosely draws upon a Corpus Christi play's cyclical dramatic model and begins with a heaven-bound Mahomet being intimidated by his angels into initiating a search for virtue in an Arabia so mired in immorality that he had intended to destroy it. After comic misunderstandings, unrequited love, villainy, greed and some elaborate song and dance routines, the three interlinking plot strands begin to propel their protagonists up to Mahomet's heaven for judgement.

Starting with Mahomet's threat to conjure a drought for forty days and nights to purge Arabia of its sin (in a direct inversion of the Noahic flood in Genesis), the play concludes with a carefully orchestrated parody of Revelation. This despite Percy's unique claim in his prologue that 'A Text out of the Alcoran wee bring you' (Prologue l. 3). While the play is extrapolated from a legend of angelic visitation itself drawn out of a few Qur'ānic lines, and Percy almost certainly did have access to Bibliander's 1543 printed edition of the Qur'ān, the subject matter owes less to that text and considerably more to the medieval polemic of Riccoldo da Montecroce and to Percy's own fertile imagination.[111] Having his beard tugged by his own angels and stooping to clean the shoe of a mortal empress he desires, who contemptuously demands that he kiss her 'cul' (backside), Mahomet's adoption of a godly stance in final judgement, with 'hand down and hand up, contrary to christ's in judgement, Left hand up, and Right hand down' (5.13.s.d.), seems rather incongruous. However, before he doles out a series of suitably absurd punishments, involving the

empress Epimenide being 'thrust into the Moone' (5.13.83) and the porter of heaven being lashed 'Ten thousand thousand' times with 'gold wyres' (5.13.105–6), there is a surprise arrival at this Mahometan Olympus.

Enter Mahomet's sworn enemy 'Haly', who is 'gorgeous to behold' (in a later version of the play Haly is 'brave like the sun'), followed by representations of a range of professions 'of both the Sects Turks and Persians' (5.13.s.d.) – unfortunately the otherwise extensive stage directions do not indicate if they are attired differently.[112] To Mahomet he declares, 'I have subscribed to your Booke' (5.13.3), and when pressed further, he responds with an extraordinary speech. First he reflects on the 'broyles, warrs, / The Theft's and Massakers, that have been practisd / In the world belowe' since Mahomet's death, despite their difference being about 'one silly quirk, but the onely / Difference but of our contrary Sects' (5.13.10–14). Then Haly himself, 'sole Author of that contrary Sect', fell in battle and was close to death. At that point, with 'pen in hand, to mend or marr my Booke', he had a vision – there appeared to him, 'In burning Mantles, and in robes of flame / The Ghosts that long lay deade of either Sect', with Mahomet's followers carrying 'their Alcoran, by you confirmed, / The other it of late by mee reformed'. A debate ensues, to which Haly responds:

> I see it, Sirs, that you
> But differ in one little Quirk of myne,
> Which from the first inventing of the same
> I confesse I ever stood my self but doubtfull off
> And much more now, when as I feele my soule
> Upon the Agonies of Death, Nor know I
> What to say, or what to think, The dreade God,
> If trewe it be the Truth's conteyned in th'one
> Graunt, for thy gloryes cause, I beseech thee,
> The weightier may weight down th'one hand of myne,
> Th'other, as lighter, may mount with the other,
> This sayd, I tooke in either hand their Alcorans,
> And poisd them two, th'one hand with the other,
> When straite, without cause or reason for it,
> I found, by one graine, ours to be more light,
> Instantly whereat, I did subscribe to yours,
> And so, in zealous Extasye of Spirit,
> On a Camel my pleased soule flew hither,
> And all these soules, with mee unite, in Trayne.
> (5.13.27–62)

Despite its setting and ostensible subject matter, this is a distinctly Christian kind of death-bed repentance in which a heretic repents of his

'error' and returns to the orthodox fold. Haly reflects upon the schism that divides 'Turks and Persians' – one 'silly quirk' that has resulted in enmity between these two erroneously paralleled messiah figures and repeated slaughter, to the point that all Arabia's towns are 'spent'. Percy jettisons the established narrative of this schism put forward by Jenkinson and Ducate (amongst others) who, although they differ wildly on the detail, all concur that its origins lay in disputes over the succession following Mahomet's death. For all Haly's lengthy reflection, he also declines to reveal what exactly the 'little Quirk of myne' is, although its veracity seems to be rather flimsy given that Haly himself had 'ever been but doubtfull' of it. The closest an audience is allowed to come to discovering the rationale behind Haly's schism is the revelation that both he and Mahomet have their own distinct Alcorans, with Haly noting that both originate in the version 'confirmed' by Mahomet, but his own had been of 'late by mee reformed'.

The whole scenario is entirely Percy's own, and the language of reform and error here demonstrates how Percy uses Mahometan schism to reflect upon Christian discord, with Persia again figured as Protestantism. The lament at the human consequences of religious strife, the emphasis on Haly's error – a word redolent of heresy – his return to an 'Order and Institution' that has ever been 'Accounted best' and particularly the focus on an ultimately mistaken reforming of scripture all point towards an assertion of the primacy and truth of orthodoxy – in this case, although the terminology is carefully indistinct, that is surely the orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic church. The Percy family had long been tainted with accusations of Catholic sympathies, and having attempted to negotiate the sympathetic treatment of English Catholics once King James took the throne, Henry Percy had been imprisoned in the Tower for seventeen years for his supposed part in the Catholic Gunpowder Plot of 1605.[113] In drawing together a dramatic format outlawed in its original form, an Arabia that is a satirical version of England, and portrayals of Mahomet as a kind of Christ and Haly as a kind of Luther/Tyndale figure, William Percy imagines Mahometanism anew in a provocative synthesis with his own religious position. In doing so he demonstrates the rich dramatic possibilities the figure of Mahomet generated at a point when religious boundaries might be provocatively blurred.

The interplay between the elision of different religions and their exclusive definition is explored in quite different ways in John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins's *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607). The play presents a vision of English travel and the penetration

of Christian and non-Christian spaces by the three Shirley brothers, whose entwined fortunes are fused with a romance-based nationalism that glosses over their problematic status at home – Anthony became a Catholic; Robert would later return to England as representative of the Persian monarch. Anthony Parr has persuasively speculated that this glossing, coupled with other surprising elements – in particular a decision not to draw on contemporary anti-papist rhetoric when portraying the pope – suggests a close Shirley involvement in the production of the play. Certainly Thomas Shirley's return to England in December 1606 precipitated a propagandist push that involved a pamphlet, *The Three English Brothers*, published earlier in 1607 and written by professional hack Anthony Nixon.[114] Thomas 'may well have encouraged plans for a stage play as well, to give maximum publicity to the brothers' adventures'.[115] As a consequence the play is a curious collision of different elements – a Shirley vanity project, an attempt to capitalise on a contemporary vogue for travel plays and romance motifs, a fantasy of English nationalism, a vision of contemporary Persia – and contains an almost bewildering profusion of different religious perspectives.

The Travels dramatises a greater range of religious belief than any other play of the early modern period. Aside from the appearance of the pope, the 'father of our Mother Church, / The stair of men's salvations' (5.38–9) who is committed to 'make Christian Turkish land' (5.88), and the stereotypical portrayal of the Jew Zariph, who swears by his 'Hebrew God and sanctified King' (9.15), there is of course an English Protestantism represented by the brothers, consistently muted in favour of a non-specific Christian unity, alongside a division of Mahometanism into the Sunni Ottoman 'Turks' and the Shia Safavid 'Persians'. Although Day, Rowley and Wilkins seem confident in their representation of the Ottomans and their belief system – the Great Turk is, as in *Tamburlaine* and other earlier drama, the 'joy and comfort of great Mahomet' (8.25) – their portrayal of the belief of the Persians veers across the spectrum of possibilities.

Sir Anthony Shirley's arrival in the Persian court triggers amazement from the Sophy, who exclaims that whether Shirley be 'God or Christian', he wishes 'to be no other but as he' (1.78–9), and his jealous advisers Halibeck and Calimath note that he dotes on the new arrival 'Most devoutly; we shall have his statue erected in our temple shortly' (1.81–2). After a display of the Christian brothers' martial prowess, the advisors' bitter outrage would seem to be proven right, as the Sophy exclaims 'Next Mortus Ali, and those deities / To whom we Persians pay devotion, / We do adore thee' (1.87–9). This erroneous vision of Persians worshipping

idols in temples is clearly reminiscent of the classicised idol of Mahomet presented by Greene in *Alphonsus of Aragon* with which Chapter 3 began. While that was a single idol, the suggestion of numerous deities alongside Mortus Ali – affirmed in the Sophy's exclamation by 'Mortus Ali and all our Persian Gods' (11.17) – links to the similarly classicised pantheon of deities that characterises Mahometanism in the romance tradition. In a neat appropriation of the reaction of New World natives to the English, as recorded by Thomas Harriot and others, an Englishman is adored as a god, whilst Persian religion is framed as a kind of romance Mahometanism.[116]

The following scene presents something quite different – a kind of Persian paganism. Halibeck addresses the Sophy, responding venomously to Anthony Shirley's evangelical efforts:

> Shall you, whose empire for these thousand years
> Have given their adoration to the sun,
> The silver moon and those her countless eyes
> That like so many servants wait on her,
> Forsake those lights? Perpetually abide
> And kneel to one that lived a man and died? (2.190–5)

There is, as Parr has noted, a suggestion of Zoroastrianism here, which contemporary observers had commented on.[117] This speech also, however, taps into an older mythology of Persian worship – originating in Herodotus – from which subsequent sources suggested the Biblical Magi sprang.[118] Writing around the same time, Samuel Purchas was guarded about the Persian provenance of the wise men of the Gospels, but did identify Persia as a centre for the Magi. He also turned to Herodotus, presenting Persian belief similarly to Halibeck, but Purchas placed his account at odds with the play's earlier depiction of Persian idolatry:

> The Persians neither erect Images, nor Altars, nor Temples, and impute it to madnesse in such as doe: therefore as I thinke, because they are not of the Greekes opinion, that the Gods haue arisen from men. Their custome is, ascending vp the highest hilles to offer sacrifices to *Iupiter,* calling the whole circle of heauen *Iupiter.* They sacrifice to the *Sunne,* and *Moone,* and *Earth,* to the *Fire,* and *Water,* and *Windes:* to these onely haue they accustomed to sacrifice from the beginning. They sacrifice also to *Vrania,* which they haue learned of the Assyrians, and Arabians.[119]

Are these two versions of idolatrous and pagan Persian belief compatible in *The Travels*? For the latter, the dramatists have adopted elements of Herodotus's conception – the pagan worship of the sun and moon – but ignored others, in particular the dismissal of temples and idols and the

use of sacrifice. The two seem at odds, particularly given the prominence accorded Mortus Ali elsewhere in the play, but when imagined as part of a loosely conceived classical pantheology they do not necessarily contradict each other. Once more a vague and composite version of Mahometan belief is played out on the stage.

Both paganism and idolatry are at odds with the standard and relatively cursory presentation of Persian religion in Nixon's pamphlet (the play's source). He writes:

> For their deuotion, it is much after the *Turkish* ceremonies, their Priests somewhat differing in their Orders, and habit, their Temples and religious places, much after their building and fashion. The *Persian* praieth to *Mahomet,* and *Mortus Ally,* The *Turkes* both to them, and three others, that were *Mahomets* seruants: against which three, the *Persian* still inueighs, and is an enemie.
>
> Their conceit of *Christ,* is, that hee was a great Prophet, a most holy and religious man, beloued of God, & mighty both in deed and word, but no way to bee compared to *Mahomet,* for *Mahomet* (say they) was that most excellent and final Prophet, through whose grace, vertue, and power, all things concerning the Resurrection, and saluation, are made full and perfect.[120]

Halibeck's contempt for 'one that lived a man and died' (2.195), a general ignorance of Christ amongst these Persians and the absence of Mahomet confirms a policy of abandoning key elements of accepted Persian belief if they do not fit the narrative structure – not an unusual tactic when dramatising non-Christian religions, as earlier examples have demonstrated.

In *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* the reduction of Shia Mahometanism from monotheism to a confused pagan polytheism serves a different purpose from earlier dramatic examples. It achieves a number of effects: again like Harriot's New World natives, it infantilises the Persians in the face of Anthony Shirley's relentless evangelical fervour, and makes their eventual conversion almost inevitable; it highlights their opposition to the 'Turks', thus pushing Shirley ambitions for an Anglo-Persian alliance; and it de-Mahometanises the Shia, rendering them less threatening and more amenable to English Protestantism. This is the context for Anthony's lengthy speech asserting common religious purpose – if 'Our sins are all alike; why not our God?' (1.180) – and also for the two paralleled attempts at conversion in the play.

The first push for conversion occurs after Robert and a Persian army has defeated the 'Turks' and reversed their fortunes. They have captured 'Between thirty and forty of their chief commanders' (7.12) and, acting for the Sophy, Robert faces a dilemma:

Robert. We are now here the Persian substitute
And cannot use our Christian clemency
To spare a life. Off with all their heads!
Speak, do you renounce your prophet Mahomet?
Bow to the deity that we adore
Or die in the refusal.
2 or 3 Turks. For Mahomet we die.
Persian. Join Mortus Ali then with Mahomet,
That slew your prophets Omar and Uthman
And on a snowy camel went to heaven,
And yet you shall find grace in Persia.
Turks. For Mahomet, none but Mahomet.
Robert. To death with them,
The rest shall follow. (7.14–24)

Yet another version of Persian belief is dramatised in this scene, derived directly from Ducate's travel account, which reproduces the notion that the difference between the 'Turk' and the Persian is based in competing prophethood. 'Turks' are slavishly devoted to Mahomet, Persians to Mortus Ali, and slaughter is the norm. That Robert insists the 'Turks' bow 'to the deity *we* adore' raises the spectre of his turning native and exchanging his Christ for Mortus Ali – a possibility totally at odds with the Shirley agenda, but clearly present in the portraits of Robert that survive.

The second attempt to force conversion comes with Sir Thomas Shirley's imprisonment and torture at the hands of 'the Great Turk'. The latter's demands that Shirley reveal his identity quickly become demands for conversion once he is racked, with the emperor astonished at his English Christian fortitude:

Great Turk. We stand amazed at thy constancy.
Yet answer us: wilt thou forsake thy faith,
Become as we are, and to Mahomet
Our holy prophet, and his Alcoran
Give thy devotion? – and by our kings we swear
We will accept thee in the place of kings.
Sir Thomas. First shall the sun melt from his restless seat
Ere that our name shall turn *apostata*;
Thy kingdoms be unpeopled, and thy nations
Become as free for beasts as now for men;
Thyself (as sometimes were thy ancestors)
Fed in a cage and dragged at conqueror's heels.
Great Turk. Presumptuous Christian! (12.107–19)

Conspicuously contrasted with Robert's attempts to convert by persuasion, even if he is forced to kill his captives in the Persian manner, the

'Great Turk's' willingness to force conversion under torture is implicit evidence of the weakness of his own faith, as is his offer of money and power (as in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*). Thomas's reference to the ignominy of Bajazeth's treatment in the first part of *Tamburlaine* is apposite, given that *The Travels* reproduces the rigidly anti-Ottoman, anti-Mahomet position of that play. His stoic resolve when tortured replicates the shining example presented to onlookers by each of the Shirleys elsewhere in the play – the 'Great Turk' is so moved by Thomas's 'strength of faith' (12.122) that he relents, and further evangelical possibilities open up.

As in all the earlier examples, but here extended to become a political stratagem, Persia and Mortus Ali are closely allied to England and to Protestantism. The conclusion of the play, with the birth of a child to Robert and the Sophy's niece, its promised baptism by the Sophy and the establishment of a Christian church in Persia, affirms this dynamic once more.[121] Turning Persia Christian is the aim, with the necessary rejection of both Mahomet and, once he has been used to facilitate the wholesale conversion of Persia, Mortus Ali. In their place, this Christian Anglo-Persian child becomes a kind of idol, the new Christian church its temple, in a formulation of anti-Ottoman superhuman hybridity that recalls Henry V's resolve to 'compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard' (5.2.207–9). Thomas Shirley and his brothers would no doubt have expected such a vision to flourish in the new circumstances of Jacobean Britain and to have appealed to the king himself, but they were mistaken.[122]

Initially unwilling to pursue the Mahometan alliances of his predecessor, in the first years of his reign James's energies were spent developing a new unity within Christendom that *The Travels* valourises. Richard Knolles, dedicating his *Generall historie of the Turkes* (1603) to James, encourages the king to attack the infidel in alliance with other Christian princes, amongst whom 'your sacred Maiestie for glorie, honour, strength and power (God long preserue the same) is now second to none'.[123] Yet the circumstances of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and the rise in anti-papal sentiment that resulted, shifted the context in which foreign policy decisions were made in the Jacobean court and moved England away from Christian conciliation. In this respect, the Shirleys seem to have missed their opportunity and, in pressing an agenda of alliance and evangelism, *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* offers a staged vision of Persia that self-consciously revisits earlier stage portrayals of Islam as an anachronistic concatenation of non-Christian belief systems.

There was a later flourish of dramatic interest in Persia in the middle of the seventeenth century, marked by John Denham's *The Sophy* (1642) – one of the last plays acted at Blackfriars before the closure of the theatres – and Robert Baron's closet drama *Mirza* (1655). Political allegory eclipses religion as their primary concern, and aside from recognition of the importance of Mahomet to Persians, contradicted in both plays by assertions of sun worship, any new sophistication lies not in the drama but in Baron's extensive notes.[124] These are based on information gleaned from two popular English travel books, George Sandys's *A relation of a iourney* (1615) and Thomas Herbert's *A relation of some yeares travaile* (1634). It is the latter that offers a detailed description of the religion of the Persians, one based on earlier material supplemented by some outlandish myths and the reproduction of the 'prayers' and 'commandments' of the Persians, considered authentic enough to be copied out in at least one later seventeenth-century commonplace book.[125]

The presence of idolatry in the earlier *Travels* indicates its longevity as a marker of pre-Christian possibilities in a dramatist's repertoire; idolatry only begins to fade by *The Sophy* and *Mirza* later in the seventeenth century. Idol worshippers on the stage occupy a position of civilised subservience to Protestant Christianity – they are ripe for conversion, morally and thus militarily weak. After all, idols (as readily available props) offered a way of materialising non-Christian religion on the stage, and in the process defined it fundamentally apart from English Protestantism. Idolatry also – as in *Alphonsus* – offered the opportunity to take a satirical swipe at Roman Catholicism. The transformation of Mahomet, and after him Mortus Ali, into a kind of idol is furthermore part of a continuing reinvigoration of romance on the early modern English stage that has profound implications for the staging of other ethno-religious identities. The result is a figure that moves beyond the bifurcated model of either heresiarch or idol inherited from an earlier period. Instead, an urge to experiment and to inspire awe, particularly in the wake of Marlowe's success with *Tamburlaine*, led to bizarre and idiosyncratic combinations and augmentations. Because each of these plays engages or reacts against earlier traditions, it is clear that there was no longer any single way to stage Mahomet or Mahometanism.

Like attempts at establishing polemical equivalence, the dramatic turn to idolatry and romance was a consequence of Reformation in the English church. Mingling mortal, idolatrous and heavenly Mahomets in different forms generates a multivalent, protean figure on the English stage. Barely materialised, Mahomet was the product of anti-papal rhetoric,

a realignment of the medieval inheritance and a renewed awareness of Mahometanism's satirical possibilities. His appearance posed difficult, even uncomfortable questions about scripture, ritual and belief. Such questions only became more insistent in the tumult of mid-seventeenth-century England.

CHAPTER 4

Bunyan's Dilemma: Seventeenth-Century Imposture, Liberty and True Mahomets

Amidst the deepest of the spiritual crises he suffered in the 1650s – 'a great storm […] twenty times worse then all I had met with before' – John Bunyan found himself in a near-childlike state of helplessness. Whole 'flouds of Blasphemies' poured upon him, causing 'great confusion and astonishment'. He became jealous even of dogs, toads and horses, for they 'had no Soul to perish under the everlasting weights of Hell for sin, as mine was like to do'.[1] These desperate circumstances, related in *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners* (1665), had come about through a series of sacrilegious but insistent questions that he could not ignore. Was there really a God? Were the scriptures 'not rather a Fable and cunning Story, then the holy and pure Word of God'?[2] Worse still was to come:

> The Tempter also would much assault me with this: How can you tell but that the Turk had as good Scriptures to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is; and could I think that so many ten thousands in so many Countreys and Kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to Heaven (if there were indeed a Heaven) and that we onely, who live but in a corner of the Earth, should alone be blest therewith?[3]

How could he be sure that Christ and Christianity were right, and Mahomet and Mahometanism wrong? How could he even be sure there was a heaven?

In despair Bunyan turned to St Paul, but even that pillar of the faith had become transformed, polluted by the example of Mahomet. Finding no consolation, he could only reflect that,

> Though we made so great a matter of Paul, and of his words, yet now could I tell but that in very deed, he, being a subtile and cunning man, might give himself up to deceive with strong delusions, and also take both that pains and travel to undo and destroy his fellows.[4]

Implicitly reflecting on the biblical narrative of Paul's pre-Christian life and contemporary Protestant anxieties about the veracity of conversion,

Bunyan's suspicions prompt him to recast Paul into the familiar rhetoric of Mahomet as trickster and deceiver. Paul is transformed, Mahometised, his falsity equivalent to the 'atheist' opinions of those, like Christopher Marlowe decades earlier, who were alleged to have asserted Moses to be a 'juggler' and to have persuaded men 'not to be afeard of bugbeares and hobgoblins'.[5] Not only playwrights said such things – writing in 1600, William Vaughan disapprovingly noted that Pope Leo X had often said 'that Moses, Christ and Mahomet were three of the greatest dissemblers'.[6] Mahomet's imputed cynicism in fabricating religion offers a way of exploring unbelief, and in this context such rhetoric would achieve a new vitality in deeply controversial texts like *De Tribus Impostoribus* (*The Treatise of the Three Imposters*) that circulated in late-seventeenth-century England. This anonymous and notorious example had been written early in the century, but was erroneously claimed to be based on a thirteenth-century original.[7]

Bunyan's Mahomet departs from previous examples, standing for an alternative belief system that appears tantalisingly valid, albeit as a troubling inversion of Christianity. He is not characterised in the established language of demonisation. It might be argued that Bunyan's introduction of Mahomet is a rhetorical ploy of no particular novelty; that Mahometanism had been designed by God to tempt the faithful; that using a Mahometan figure, as with the Soldan in Mandeville's *Travels*, to indicate the scale of a crisis – in this case the protagonist's own crisis of faith – was an old trick. Bunyan was certainly adept in employing such devices to propel the narrative of his spiritual autobiography, emphasising his redemption in biblical terms and at key points marking his own identification with St Paul. From this perspective Mahomet becomes simply a prop in the ostensibly personal psycho-religious drama of a Protestant Christian mind. If this is the case then Bunyan's reference differs little from those that had come before, another product of a tradition that gave Mahomet meaning only in relational terms. Mahomet remains the antithesis of Christ and denied authenticity, for it is the reassurance of a dependably authentic and truthful faith that Bunyan seeks here, and Mahomet cannot remain any kind of viable alternative to Christ for long. In time – this crisis lasts at least a year – scripture convinces Bunyan of his own folly, although the fundamental questions that emerge remained unanswered. Pondering these questions in retrospect, Bunyan reassures his readers that it was 'by the distaste that they gave unto my spirit, I felt there was something in me that refused to embrace them'.[8]

Mahomet's place at the centre of Bunyan's examination of faith does, however, raise some intriguing issues. If we take him at his word, then Bunyan did seriously consider the possibility that Mahomet and Mahometanism were authentic, that Christianity was a lie – worse, a poisonous and cynical fabrication. Although he does not sustain it, realising that these questions are planted by the 'great Tempter', the very acknowledgement of this possibility is momentous. It inverts Christianity, placing it in the position conventionally occupied by Mahometanism in Christian texts, and submits it to the same prejudiced scrutiny, examining it as if through 'infidel' eyes. Bunyan's narrative asserts the *potential* of Mahomet's authenticity, and lies at the heart of subsequent Enlightenment approaches to Christianity. Much later, following his sensational *New Life of Jesus* (*Das Leben Jesu fur das deutsche Volk*) of 1864, David Strauss would argue that Jesus had to have been 'more than a Jewish Rabbi with a few charitable ideas' if he were 'fit to hold the candle to Moses and Mahomet'.[9] The life of Christ and biblical scripture were shortly to face the same deliberate and avowedly rational unpicking that Mahomet and the Alcoran had faced for centuries. The inherited assumptions of Peter of Cluny and Riccoldo da Montecroce had featured prominently in earlier depictions of Mahomet, leading to the statement of a series of apparently self-evident truths – a Mahomet so obviously false that he is damned by his own doctrine.[10] Beneath this position lies a carefully maintained but still implacable confidence in Christian universalism and the inevitability of Mahometan damnation. For Bunyan, writing in the midst of new theological questions raised by writers such as Thomas Hobbes, Isaac LePeyrere and Baruch Spinoza, nothing could any longer be certain.

Bunyan's need for a human saviour – to the point that he erroneously imagines Mahomet in that role – and his spiritual insecurities question more than Christian truth. The example he gives in which St Paul becomes unfixed and reimagined in Mahometan terms as a 'subtile and cunning man' demonstrates a use of the polemical apparatus that had been constructed around Mahomet. Paul becomes, momentarily at least, a Mahomet before Mahomet. By its very nature this reassignment demonstrates the fabricated nature of the whole edifice. If the figure of St Paul can be falsely demonised in this way, then how can a reader be certain of Mahomet's damnation? Bunyan's questioning and the tidiness of his subsequent resolution seem, in this reading, only to provoke further troubling questions. As if unsatisfied with the answers he had offered in *Grace abounding*, Bunyan returned to these issues from a position of Christian certainty in *A defence of the doctrine of justification, by faith in Jesus Christ*

(1673). Here he attacked Edward Fowler, later Bishop of Gloucester, and Fowler's *Design of Christianity* (1671) which had questioned the nonconformist preoccupation with Calvinist justification. Bunyan derides Fowler, who at the Restoration had conformed to the restored Church of England, as a 'latitudinarian', a contemptible mixture of popery, Quakerism and Socinian doctrine.[11] Fowler's fault was a lax and ill-thought-out tolerance, a perceived willingness to let believers worship according to an innate law of morality and their own practices within the Church of England, ignoring 'insubstantial' differences of doctrine and ecclesiastical organisation.

In response, Bunyan provocatively asks what Fowler would do 'if God should cast you into *Turky,* where *Mahomet* Reigns *as Lord?*' If Fowler were to remain true to his supposed convictions, he would surely have to worship according to Mahomet's rites:

> Why? Because in *Turky,* are your first sort of Fundamentals found: There are Men that have Humane Nature, and the Law of Morrals written in their hearts; they have also the Dictates thereof written within them, which teach them, those you call the Eternal Laws of Righteousness; wherefore you *both* would agree in your Essential, and immutable differences of good and evil […] and differ onely about these possitive Laws, *Indifferent things.* Yea, and *Mahomet* also for the time, because by a custome made convenient, might be now accounted worshipful, and the Circumstances that attend his Worship, especiall *those* of them, that *clash* not with the Dictates of *your* Humane Nature, might also be swallowed down.[12]

Although this is clearly satire – Fowler's tolerance of 'indifferent things' is so vague that it renders him unable to distinguish between Christianity and Mahometanism – Bunyan's introduction of Mahomet again provokes more questions than it answers. Gleefully pointing out to his readers this 'glorious Latitudinarian' who can theologically 'turn and twist like an Eel on the Angle; or rather like the Weather-cock that stands on the Steeple', Bunyan implies that only faith in Christ can define Christians apart from the 'infidel'.[13] Yet in identifying some fundamental similarities between the two religious systems he again eschews long-established polemical strategies that ensured the demonisation of Mahomet. Although relying on a Christian reader's sense of truth and falsehood to make his point, he acknowledges the coherency of Mahometanism, its establishment as a 'Law of Morrals', its adherence to 'Eternal Laws of Righteousness' and 'immutable differences of good and evil'. Aside from the central role played by Mahomet, whom Bunyan – reproducing a widespread confusion of saviour and prophet – mistakenly imagined to be Christ's antithesis, this looks remarkably like Christianity by another name.

Although dwarfed by the vast success of his later *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), John Bunyan's *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners* was popular and influential, passing through six editions in his lifetime.[14] Not one contemporary remarked upon Mahomet's place at the heart of his religious crisis – even today critics are inclined to consider it a 'brief' afterthought – suggesting questions about Mahomet's legitimacy were palatable to a mass audience by the 1670s, and might even provoke empathy.[15] In the complex devotional circumstances of the mid- and late seventeenth century a legitimate Mahomet was not unique and Bunyan was not the first to raise the possibility. The spectre of a globally dominant Mahometanism embodying a more likely 'truth' had haunted major Protestant writing on the subject since the beginnings of the Reformation.

Tyndale and Knox had both addressed the question of Mahometan truth, but it was Calvin who considered it in most detail.[16] In his sermons on Deuteronomy (published in English in 1583) Calvin alights on the example of Moses, who, like his own followers, was persecuted and in a minority. Moses shows 'that although the misbeleeuers bee more in number than wee, and doe vaunt themselves to haue all the sway … so as wee bee but a litle handefull of people, and they triumph ouer vs', yet 'wee may defie them, because we doe knowe what difference there is betwixt the pure doctrine of the Gospell, and all the abhominations and Idolatries that Sathan hath brought into the worlde'.[17] Here both the papacy and Mahomet are figured as the persecuting Egyptians, a parallel that had been made by Erasmus and others with Mahometanism alone.[18] Acknowledging the certainty of scriptural truth again represents the defining difference between the faithful and the faithless. As Calvin casts his eye across the known world, he sees

> [T]he horrible diuisions that be in the Popedome on the one side, and howe Mahomet the deceiuer hath seduced all his sect, and thirdely howe blinde the wretched Iewes are: thereby we ought to be the better assured, that seeing our GOD hath called vs to him: and familiarly vttered his fauour towardes vs (according as our Lorde Iesus Christ doeth protest that he will call vs his friendes and not his seruauntes, because the secretes of the kingdome of heauen are reuealed vnto vs by the Gospell): we ought thereby to learne to apply the same to the certaintie of our fayth, and not to regarde though the faithlesse doe sooth themselues and boast of their abhominations, because we knowe well that GOD condemneth them altogether, and that wee ourselues may be iudges thereof, forasmuch as we haue the worde, whereby the worlde must bee iudged.[19]

For Calvin, unlike Bunyan, the supposed legitimacy of other faiths and their greater number is no cause for anxiety, but rather a demonstration

of strength: his followers should be 'the better assured' by their persecution at the hands of an overwhelming number of misbelievers. They are the elect and have 'certaintie' of their salvation. Longevity of accustomed observance has no validity in this soteriological scheme, but to reinforce his argument Calvin returns to the language of the medieval chronicles in lamenting the blindness of the Jews and characterising Mahomet as 'deceiver' and as creator of a heretical 'sect'. Just as a son is not obliged to follow in his father's 'euill trade', Mahometans are mistaken to argue that they possess the truth simply because it is 'eight hundred yeres ago since that Mahomet brought vs to his law, and it hath bin kept euer since, our fathers haue deliuered it vnto vs from hande to hande'. Similarly mistaken, of course, are the papists, who 'alledge their holy Councels; and the Traditions of auncient lawes' give them the same usurped authority.[20]

John Bunyan clearly inherited a Protestant legacy that makes a virtue of persecution while raising the possibility of religious relativism only in order to rigorously deny it. But the certainty that suffuses Calvin's response to the issue has gone. Not for Bunyan the comforting knowledge that he stands among the elect. Shorn of the oppositional certainties of earlier theologians, Bunyan's dilemma is further magnified by an absence of the established opprobrium that had buttressed Calvin's response. That the devil tempts Bunyan with such questions and not Mahomet is a revealing departure from earlier examples. In his moment of crisis, Bunyan's inability to fall back on the certainties that Tyndale, Knox and Calvin claimed to rely on results from changing attitudes to belief and the nature of the divine in Christian theology, coupled with new responses to Mahomet and Mahometanism that had emerged during the early seventeenth century. Although not explicitly a response to Bunyan, the fact that the Dean of Norwich, Humphrey Prideaux, would annex his *The True Nature of Imposture fully displayed in the life of Mahomet* with a 'vindication of Christianity from this charge' in 1697 indicates the extent to which the role of the life of Mahomet had profoundly changed.

Between the publication of Calvin's sermons on Deuteronomy in 1583 and Bunyan's *Grace abounding* in 1665, momentous developments had swept the British Isles. These wider crises of authority, authenticity and identity were interwoven with new knowledge about Mahomet and his religion, as reflected in Bunyan's personal struggles. Monarchy had been abolished and reinstated, the political and print culture of the Civil Wars had disrupted previous certainties regarding church and state; the first English translation of the Alcoran was published in the immediate aftermath of the regicide; Chairs in Arabic had been established

at both Oxford and Cambridge. Less than a decade after the publication of Bunyan's spiritual autobiography, Henry Stubbe would circulate a text vindicating Mahomet, about whom more information was available than ever before. As in previous centuries, when confronting issues of religion and statecraft – at the forefront of social and political change in this period – English writers turned to the figure of Mahomet, newly figured as the great 'imposter', and to the Alcoran. Although the two had been hitherto indivisible in Christian polemic, new scholarly approaches to this and other Arabic texts, and efforts to translate them into English, would play their part in generating the new climate in which Bunyan encountered Mahomet, whom Samuel Purchas identified as the 'seducer of the World'.[21]

I. THE FABLES AND THE FABLER

Most histories of Arabism in England locate William Bedwell as a point of origin – he was 'the first Englishman after the Middle Ages to undertake the serious study of Arabic'.[22] He had been advisor and occasional translator to the crown and had met the Moroccan ambassadorial delegation on their visit to London in 1600–1; he was the author of an ambitious Arabian dictionary that was never published, and a collector of Arabic manuscripts, who brought the first Arabic type into England; and he was the teacher of Thomas Erpenius and Edward Pococke.[23] The rise of English Arabism in the seventeenth century, through figures like John Selden, John Greaves, Erpenius and Pococke (and, to a lesser extent, Pococke's son Edward), thus owes a great deal to Bedwell. One surprising element of the English study of Arabic that has been overlooked is that in its early incarnations, being primarily concerned with enabling further biblical study and with evangelism, English Arabism was largely uninterested in the figure of Mahomet.

Apart from Bedwell, virtually none of these English scholars published any material directly concerning Mahomet – Abraham Wheelock, first professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge, had sought to publish a vituperative refutation of the Alcoran in the late 1640s, while Pococke's translation of the *Specimen historiæ Arabum, sive Gregorii Abul Farajii Malatiensis, De origine & moribus Arabum* (1650) tackled some of the myths surrounding Mahomet with evangelical intent, but otherwise Bedwell stands alone until the end of the century.[24] New primary sources and concerted academic study did not, however, substantially mollify a dominant demonising perspective, at least not in public, but they did

accelerate the demand for authenticity that animates Bunyan's later crisis. Many writers would later respond to that demand, but it was initially spurred by Bedwell's landmark *Mohammedis imposurae: that is, A discouery of the manifold forgeries, falshoods, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer Mohammed with a demonstration of the insufficiencie of his law* (1615), to which is annexed his *Arabian trudgman* and an index of the chapters of the Alcoran.[25]

Authenticity is manifested specifically in the new prominence accorded translations direct from Arabic. The translation of texts, as well as of ideas and individuals, had been an important element of the Cluniac project in the twelfth century – reliable textual translation being necessary for detailed and meaningful refutation – and writers on Mahomet and Mahometanism in subsequent centuries looked back to these authoritative texts, or texts based on them, for their source material.[26] The main body of Bedwell's text is a dialogue between two Mahometans on matters of faith, translated from an Arabic original 'printed in Italy some time after 1566'.[27] Bedwell was convinced of both its antiquity and its veracity, despite initial reservations that many of the 'obiections, demands, answers, arguments, and speeches are too good to be thought to come from the breast of an Heathen, Turke, or Saracen', but it is clearly a Christian forgery, one of many faked disputations designed to exploit key Mahometan weaknesses and extol the glories of the Christian gospel.[28]

Despite its purported authenticity, the *Mohammedis imposurae* adds little to the material already in circulation about Mahomet. There is an attempt to demonstrate the veneration with which Mahometan believers invoke him, some new elements of the *mi'râj* and an attempt to challenge Mahometan universalism on the basis of Mahomet's linguistic limitations, especially when the 'God of all goodnessse gaue the knowledge of all tongues miraculously to his Apostles, and to his Disciples and Preachers'. Bedwell also reaffirms that Mahomet's carnality bars him from sanctity, as 'one of the company of the shamelesse and void of grace', and makes the similarly familiar assertion that he performed no miracles, and 'miracles are indeede a manifest note of a Prophet, and of prophecy: and of the preachers of the will of God almighty, which loueth goodnes, & commandeth men to loue one another'.[29] Otherwise the prominence of 'Mohammedis' in the title is not reflected in the work, itself an indication of his continuing 'saleability' in the marketplace: instead the *Mohammedis imposurae* is largely concerned with the deliberate refutation of doctrine and ritual.

In terms of extending knowledge, it is the dictionary of terms – the 'Trudgman' – and the detailing of Alcoranic chapters that are most important, and indicate the scale of Bedwell's Arabist project. But they are again almost entirely unconcerned with Mahomet. There is one exception – his dictionary entry. It reads:

> MOHAMMED, (*Mem* being doubled by *Teshdid*) *Mohammed*, *Muhammedes*, *Muamedes*, *Mohammetus*, *Machomed*, *Moammetus*, was the name of that famous impostour and seducer of the Arabians or Saracens, the first author I meane and inuentor of the Alkoran and lawes of that superstitious faction. He was borne in Arabia, as the Hisoriographers do report, on the 22 day of Aprill (*x. Kal. Maij*) in the yeare after the birth of Christ 596: He died on the 13 of March (3. *Id. Martij*) in the yeare of our Lord 637, being of the age of 41 yeares, and hauing reigned 10. He was buried in Mecha, a city of Arabia Felix.[30]

In its absolute assertion of Mahomet's falsity and his authorship of the Alcoran, Bedwell sets the Arabist tone for much of the following century, and in doing so sidesteps damaging allegations of irresponsibility or even complicity in publishing such material.[31] There are, however, new developments here too – newly verified detail, even if inaccurate, the apparatus of Arabic scholarship, and a newly authentic name – Mohammed.[32]

Yet, as the vehemence of Bedwell's condemnation suggests, authentic texts bring their own problems. Ketton's Latin translation of the Alcoran, *Lex Mahumet pseudo-prophete* of 1143, had required a polemical surround – extended in Bibliander's sixteenth-century printed edition – to protect a reader from its dangerous allure. The *Mohammedis imposurae* is no different and, despite being a very different text, adopts the same tradition, instigated by Ketton and Peter the Venerable to contain the Alcoran. Bedwell is explicit: after listing the major translations available to Christian readers from Ketton to Arrivabene, he addresses his reader directly – 'Thus you see what presidents I haue, for that which is done: Such as I doubt not, but will fully satisfie the learned and indifferent: the peeuish and froward, I weigh not: this paines was not taken for them.'[33] Bedwell's targeting of a class-specific readership links to other points where he is forthright in his anticipation of criticism. In a strategic move that is strongly reminiscent of the way Christopher St German had positioned his *Here after followeth a lytell treatyse agaynst Mahumet and his cursed secte* in 1531, Bedwell writes:

> If any man shall obiect and say, as the consistorie of Rome did by the Talmud, That it were better that such foolish fables and blasphemies were concealed and vtterly suppressed, then made publike and common to all: I answer, I haue done no more, nay not so much, as the ancient Fathers, *Tertullian*, *Irenaeus*,

Epiphanius, *Augustine*, and others, who haue taken vpon them to confute the errors and opinions of Heretiks, haue done.[34]

This places Bedwell's translation in august company. If a troubled reader were still not convinced, despite the existence in print of a range of more heinous heresies, Bedwell goes further to placate them. A 'learned diuine' is reassuringly quoted, who had asserted that 'there is no one opinion so impious & wicked' in the Alcoran 'which may not be found in the bookes of those writers which I haue before spoken of', and furthermore their books 'do breed wellnere as oft as conies'.[35] Heresy is everywhere already, Bedwell seems to be arguing – indeed much of it is 'more absurd and grosse, then the Alkoran doth afford' – and in polemically diminishing Mahometanism in this fashion he demystifies it, making it less threatening and more available to a popular market that, by his own admission, thirsts after heretical material. What could be more desirable for such a market than the Alcoran itself?

As Thomas E. Burman notes, the Qur'ān 'was a best seller in medieval and early modern Europe' that 'demanded to be read by Christian Europeans across the whole period from the mid-twelfth to the mid-sixteenth century'.[36] From Robert of Ketton's work, translations of the 'Alcoran' became a primary vehicle for apparently authentic accounts of Mahomet and polemical assertions of his authorship. This key debunking of Mahometan revelation meant that readers were encouraged to approach the text as a cynical construct in which they might find the debauched mind of Mahomet himself. Indeed, the two mirrored each other – the Alcoranic 'Brat' as 'deformed as the parent, and as full of Heresies, as his scald head was of scurf', as Alexander Ross would later assert.[37] Ketton's translation was also 'encircled within a hedge of marginal notes and jarring rubrics, hostile illustration and polemical accompanying works' in which the vituperative biography of 'Mahvmeth' plays a major role.[38] The standard Latin glosses surrounding Ketton's translation further affirm the details of this lewd and hypocritical life.[39] Theodore Bibliander's printed version of Ketton's translation, the influential *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina ac ipse Alcoran* (1543), went even further in augmenting the text and marshalling his readers' experience of it. Bibliander's text contained almost all of the material collected by Peter the Venerable for Ketton's twelfth-century original and 'supplemented all these works with a series of further (and in some cases excerpted) polemical, apologetic, and historical treatises that had been written in the centuries since, the result being large enough that it required three books in one large volume to accommodate it'.[40] The

printing and circulation of this volume was the culmination of a series of Reformation preoccupations, but also prompted new emphases in writing about Mahomet and was the basis for a slew of translations into European vernaculars, including versions in Italian, German and Dutch.

The first of these was *L'Alcorano di Macometto*, produced by Andrea Mocenigo under the pseudonym Andrea Arrivabene in Venice in 1547. Given its long and defining association with trade from Islamic lands, Venice would seem the obvious location to publish the first translation of the Alcoran into a Christian vernacular. Less obvious is how Arrivabene's translation became the basis for the first substantial reproduction of the Alcoranic text in English. Scraps representing approximations of Arabic had appeared in print in England from as early as 1496, when Pynson's edition of Mandeville's *Travels* had featured the transliteration and deciphering of the Shahadah. 'Laa ilāha illa Allāh, wa Muhammad(un) rasūl Allāh' ('There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God') becomes 'Laeles ella Machomet rozes ella. That is to saye. There is noo god but one and Machomet his messenger'.[41] It appears in various forms in a number of texts thereafter and reaffirms the central position Mahomet was perceived to occupy in Mahometan doctrine, but it also undercut the persistent and mistaken notion of a Christ-like divinity. Description – fanciful and vague as well as accurate and detailed – of the contents of the Alcoran was also a stock feature of Christian polemic, and a dominant feature of Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra Legem Sarracenorum*, for instance. Such texts often referred back to Ketton's twelfth-century scholarship, and later to Bibliander's printed version, but baulked at translating the words themselves in any substantial way. It was not until Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (1613), described by its author as bringing 'Religion from Paradise to the Arke' and following her 'round the World', that this convention was broken and 'Mahomet's book' might be encountered directly.[42]

Purchas acknowledges both Arrivabene and Ketton to have been his primary sources, presumably taken in by the former's claim that his text was 'tradotto nuovamente dall'Arabo'.[43] Rather than reproduce the Alcoran in some semblance of its original structure, as these previous translators had done, Purchas entirely reframes it in terms of Christian themes and repeatedly emphasises Mahomet's authorship. The Alcoran becomes all about Mahomet. Thus '*he* writeth', '*he* affirmeth' and '*he* dreameth' [my emphasis].[44] According to this new scheme, the original 'Azoards' are selectively quoted and clustered around key concepts: Mahomet's perceptions of God; of creation; of paradise; of pilgrimage; of

hell; of the prophets, as well as Mahometan notions 'concerning his law and Alcoran'.[45] Typical of Christian writing on the Alcoran, emphasis is placed on the fantastical nature of the text, on Mahomet's use of scripture to 'excuseth his owne basenesse', on its many contradictions, and on its synthetic nature. Part of the appeal of the text, Purchas asserts, is precisely that it is not all monstrous, for 'in diuers places of the Alcoran; the better to colour his filthinesse' Mahomet has 'dispersed good sentences, like roses scattered on a dung-hill, and flowers in a puddle'. These positives reflect and affirm Purchas's Christian perspective and that of his audience: they concern 'almes, prayer, tithing, iustice, &c', all elements that had been singled out for Christian admiration in earlier accounts.[46]

Altering the structure of the Alcoran to fit his encyclopaedic project, Purchas follows Christian convention in preceding it with an account of the life. This is largely conventional in content, the author acknowledging that the 'life of *Mahumet* is at large detailed by diuers Authors' and indicating his preference for the detail offered in Arrivabene's Italian edition – although he synthesises a number of different texts.[47] Purchas first turns to detailed genealogy, purportedly biblical in origin, tracing Mahomet from Ismael to his second son Chedar and further:

> Of *Chedar* descended *Thebic*, and so in order, *Caab*, *Numhib*, *Almucaien*, *Ahlucen*, *Acaha*, *Amubasca*, *Amir*, *Celif*, *Nisca*, *Abhimaista*, *Aadirem*, *Scaad*, *Mudhar*, *Ilges*, *Mudicita Hudhatfa*, *Chinene*, *Anascere*, *Melich*, *Phasce*, *Paliff*, *Lunai*, *Cabnai*, *Morta*, *Chalef*, *Facien*, *Abdamanef*, *Abdalmutalif*, *Abdalla* the supposed father of *Mahumet* […][48]

Generational lists to establish an historical foundation for Mahomet's 'race' were unusual, but – as George Sale's considerable eighteenth-century expansion demonstrates – later became common.[49] Throughout his account, as here, Purchas is judicious in his use of sources, presenting considerable detail – particularly when previous authors appear to disagree – in an attempt to offer as authentic an account as possible. Purchas's preoccupation with authenticity is manifested in an obsession with what Mahometans write and think about Mahomet; in this Purchas and Bedwell initiate a prevailing theme of English approaches in the seventeenth century, as obliquely reflected in Bunyan's crisis. So Mahomet's father was so base and obscure 'that the Turks themselues doubt whether hee were an Arabian or a Persian, notwithstanding that genealogical table'.[50] What follows is a narrative reasserting the veracity of the polemical Christian mythology surrounding Mahomet – his relentless ambition, his melding of Judaism and Christianity, his marriage to

the wealthy widow (here '*Gadisa*'), the cynical manipulation of his epilepsy, his extreme lustfulness, improbably equal 'to fortie other men, or (as some say) fiftie', and his unfulfilled promise to ascend after death. After all of this, Purchas throws in a strikingly Bunyanesque caveat. The Christian Mahomet and his life of hypocrisy and heresy are not endorsed by Mahometans. Instead, 'the Mahumetans themselues doe report otherwise, fabling this fabler great matters, as if the most excellent personage of the world'.[51] The end result of this concern to reflect an indigenous perspective – a new development – is the addition in the 1617 edition of *Purchas His Pilgrimage* of a new section solely devoted to 'The Saracen Storie of Mahomet's Life.'[52]

The insertion of authentic Mahometan material in the third edition suggests a new emphasis in accounts of Mahomet's life. Although polemicists from the earliest accounts through to the sixteenth century gave prominence to theological disputations purporting to contain a 'true' Mahometan voice, and to supposedly authentic accounts of Mahomet and Mahometanism, these invariably resulted in Christian victory and validation. Although by no means sympathetic to Mahometans elsewhere, Purchas's account does attempt to present the beliefs of non-believers dispassionately. This did not begin with the 1617 edition – much of the material used is reorganised from the first edition, in which Purchas devotes considerable space to relating polemicised Christian versions of tales from the *hadîth* and the *mi'râj*, with particular emphasis on the latter. These include the cleaving of the moon – an episode that becomes very popular in later English writings – the cleaning of Mahomet's heart, and the details of his night journey through the heavens into the presence of God. Much of this was taken from a book that Purchas believed had been written by a Mahometan, the *Liber generatione Mahometis*, which appeared in the prefatory material to Ketton's translation, and in Bibliander's 1543 printed edition, and was composed by Hermann of Dalmatia in the twelfth century.[53] It had partially appeared in English already, in Louis LeRoy's perennially popular *Of the Interchangeable Course, or Variety of Things in the Whole World* (*De la vicissitude ou variete des choses en l'univers*), translated by Robert Ashley in 1594, but Purchas seems to have been unaware of that volume's existence. So two versions of Mahomet's *mi'râj* were circulating in England by 1613.

One particular element of this narrative, reproduced in slightly different forms by LeRoy and Purchas, is of particular note. LeRoy writes of 'a propheticall light, which appeared first in Adam, then was continued from prophet to prophet, vntil Mahomet: shyning in their faces euen as

the sun in faire weather, and the moon when it is full'.[54] Purchas gives further detail, in language that is more scriptural in tone, referring to 'the light of the Prophet Mahomet' which he describes as a 'farre-fetched' and 'darke mysterie'.[55] The light motif recurs in John Donne's unfinished mock-epic poem on the transmigration of a single 'deathlesse soule', his 'Metempsychosis or the Progresse of the Soule' (written around 1600–1). Donne's primary inspiration was Pythagorean theories on the subject and he may well owe some inspiration to John Gower's first work, the late-fourteenth-century *Mirour de l'omme* (also known as the *Speculum Meditantis*), which deals with the origin of sin in the world.[56] Yet Donne promises to trace this soul from vessel to vessel, starting first with the forbidden fruit of paradise, through fish, swan, mouse, whale, wolf, dog, ape and on to woman in a base satirical version of the transmission of Mahomet's light. Early in the poem he points out,

> For the great soule which here amongst us now
> Doth dwell, and moves that hand, and tongue, & brow,
> Which as the Moone the sea, moves us, to heare
> Whose story, with long patience you will long;
> (For 'tis the crowne, and last straine of my song)
> This soule to whom *Luther,* and *Mahomet* were
> Prisons of flesh; this soule which oft did teare,
> And mend the wracks of th'Empire, and late Rome,
> And liv'd when every great change did come,
> Had first in paradise, a low, but fatall roome.[57]

Involved in every 'great change' since the beginning of mankind, the final contemporary embodiment of this soul is uncertain because Donne abandoned the work.[58] As a result, the poem never reaches the point at which Mahomet becomes the fleshly prison, but in explicitly paralleling Mahomet with Luther – each presiding over a different 'wrack' of Christendom – Donne utilises the same strategy as Roman Catholic polemicists from Thomas More onwards. The relatively early point in the history of human heresy and sin that Donne does reach nevertheless offers a further reason for connecting these two figures. Karl P. Wentersdorf persuasively suggests that those elements – plant, animal and human – that Donne did incorporate all have one thing in common: 'their use to symbolise various aspects of human sexuality'.[59] If his intention had indeed been to provocatively explore the notion that 'universal sexuality is the prime motivating force in the history of mankind', then who better to illustrate the intersections between religious heresy and sexuality than Luther and Mahomet?[60] Both were feverishly castigated, again by

Roman Catholic propagandists, for their licentiousness – Luther (as More had written) for his opposition to clerical celibacy and Mahomet for lasciviousness, the sexual excesses of his fabricated paradise, and his own justification for many wives. In this reading, the two are mischievously bound in Donne's satirical vision as religious revolutionaries and carnal sybarites, irrevocably linked since original sin.

At the conclusion of his account of Mahomet and his 'lawe', Purchas also resorts to satire, although of a very different type. Having described the layout of the Alcoran and quoted it at some length, he cannot resist a barbed comment on both Mahomet and seventeenth-century English manners:

> Ridiculous is the confirmation of this holy Law, by such varietie of oathes, as I am almost afraid to mention, in regard of our Gull-gallants of these times, who would sometimes be at a sette in their braue and brauing phrases, if they should not haue varietie of oathes and curses, to daube vp with such interiections all imperfections of speech, & make smoother way for the current of their gallantrie. But euen for their sakes, let vs mention a few, that they may see Mahomet had as braue a humour this way as they […][61]

He goes on to list the ways in which Mahomet 'induceth God', including 'by the blowing windes, by the watery clouds, by the sailing ships, by the Mount Sinai, the heauen, the sea, the euening Starre, the West, his pen and lines, the guiltie soule, the diuels' and 'a world more of the like'.[62] Once more Mahomet presents an opportunity to mount a contemporary satirical attack, and once more it works on an assumption of ridiculousness and excess, whether in the substance or in the practice of Mahometan belief.

Given the prolonged treatment of Mahomet and Mahometanism in *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, and its substantial augmentation in later editions, one might expect Purchas to have included some relation of Mahomet in his extension of Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (first published in 1589), the vast *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625). Hakluyt's influential text had included a Latin 'vulgate' edition of Mandeville's *Travels*, complete with a particularly pernicious version of Mahomet's life. Upon searching for Mahomet in the index of this volume, one is directed only to Mandeville. Yet Purchas chooses to remove it – a curious reader seeking further information on the prophet of the Mahometans is instructed to seek it elsewhere, either from 'my learned friend Master Bedwell' or 'my Pilgrimage'.[63] In part this exclusion indicates the extent to which the *Travels* no longer represented the authoritative life, and had been eclipsed by information that purported to be more

current and more authentic; it also suggests that Purchas was acutely aware that he, William Bedwell and a few others were comprehensively rewriting received wisdom on Mahomet.

Bedwell's *Mohammedis imposturae* and Purchas's reproductions of Mahometan texts and lore were influential in their own right, but they also prepared the ground for a truly new phenomenon, something Matthew Birchwood has described as 'one of the most extraordinary documents of the entire period … [sitting] at the epicentre of the explosive fusion of Islam and English politics'.[64] This was the first 'full' translation of the Alcoran into English, *The Alcoran of Mahomet* of 1649. Simultaneously a defining moment in the development of English Arabism and quite distinct from it, this anonymous translation was derived from the French *L'Alcoran de Mahomet* (1647), which had been rendered from the Arabic by the diplomat and orientalist Andre du Ryer.[65] Just as with Bibliander's *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina ac ipse Alcoran* (1543), *The Alcoran of Mahomet* had a troubled and controversial genesis, and was initially to have been dedicated to King Charles I had the regicide not necessitated a rapid volte-face. Subsequent translators give it short shrift – George Sale, for example, writing in 1734, suggested that the translator was both 'utterly unacquainted with the Arabic, and no great master of the French' and had 'added a number of fresh mistakes of his own to those of Du Ryer, not to mention the meanness of his language, which would make a better book ridiculous'.[66] Yet it was popular (with two imprints in 1649) and generated a later edition in the similarly auspicious year of 1688 – it seems that an English Alcoran might justifiably be associated with political turmoil and the deposition of kings. The result of all of this is a remarkable document: the product of a sophisticated French orientalist culture, clearly indebted to the Alcoranic translations of the past and their polemical apparatus, as well as to Bedwell, but also tied absolutely to the circumstances of its production, a rather ephemeral, inexpensive piece of political pamphleteering, one George Thomason collected, dated and placed within his collection of tracts without further comment.[67]

Although tempting, it would therefore be anachronistic to suggest that the main body of the text – the translation itself – is the least interesting thing about *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, especially concerning Mahomet. The considerable number of the curious who paid for it, some of whom carried it as far afield as the New World, must have done so with the expectation that they were acquiring something possibly dangerous, something strange; something that retained the frisson of the forbidden.[68] Given the

overwhelmingly dominant assumption of previous Christian polemic, and indeed the title of the text itself, its first readers must have felt they were gaining access to Mahomet himself, or at least to the supposedly divine revelations at the centre of his audaciously fraudulent religion. Before they did so, however, these readers were expected, just as in Ketton and later Bibliander's editions, to subject themselves to the purifying blast of the surrounding material.

Neither the English translator's preface to the reader nor Du Ryer's preface offer anything other than an affirmation of Mahomet's authorship and of his status as a 'false prophet', although they necessarily play down the text's dangers. As one might expect of a polemical document produced in an extremely volatile political climate, the anonymous English translator does not shy away from situating it politically. The same strategy used by Bedwell, St German and many others is employed:

> There being so many Sects and Heresies banded together against the Truth, finding that of *Mahomet* wanting to the Muster, I thought good to bring it to their Colours, that so viewing thine enemies in their full body, thou mayst the better prepare to encounter, and I hope overcome them. It may happily startle thee, to finde him to speak *English*, as if he had made some Conquest of the Nation, but thou wilt soon reject that fear, if thou consider that this is his *Alcoran* (the Ground-work of the *Turkish* Religion) hath been already translated into almost all Languages in Christendom.[69]

Birchwood persuasively argues that this address should be read as 'a frontal attack on the prevailing heterodoxy' and specifically on 'the new political and religious order of 1649' – the most prominent of numerous sects and heresies that were openly available and marshalled against the truth.[70] Why not add Mahomet's to their number? In his provocative assertion of a society degenerating into sectarian relativism, and his sequence of military metaphors, the translator repositions Mahomet even more emphatically than More and Tyndale had done in their Reformation invective of the previous century. This passage is analogous to Bunyan's personal descent into relativistic crisis, but it implies a more radical shift: Mahomet has, for the first time, learnt 'to speak English, as if he had made some Conquest of the Nation' and is defined in the present tense, as if embodied in the Alcoran itself. Its progress is Mahomet's progress. Like Christ he becomes imagined as a living presence in the world, and those concerned by Mahomet's rapid conquest of their nation are uneasily placated with the assertion that he has conquered the rest of Christendom already. Certainly Mahomet's own well-known role as warrior-prophet and his engagement in civil discord make him a particularly apposite point of

reference during the Civil Wars. Yet, as the translator hurriedly points out, the text is harmless, for it 'never gained any Proselyte where the Sword, its most forcible, and strongest argument hath not prevailed'.[71]

The real substance of the material surrounding *The Alcoran of Mahomet* comes, however, from 'A needful Caveat or Admonition for them who desire to know what use may be made of, of if there be any danger in reading the *Alcoran*' by the former royal chaplain Alexander Ross. This text has seen some critical attention of late, and was almost certainly drafted and included after the main volume was complete. It follows a brief relation of 'The Life and Death of Mahomet, the Prophet of the Turks, and Author of the Alcoran' that is, however, less well known and which, although it is quite different in tone, extends many of Ross's themes into the well-established mould of the confutation.[72] In the context of the English Civil Wars, this life offers a particular slant on the standard details drawn from the early English narrative offered by Higden and others. It also owes a specific debt to the recent publication of Walter Raleigh's *Life of Mahomet* (1637), a mysterious text that is almost certainly not by Ralegh – Walter Oakeshott asserts that it 'was certainly not by him', though 'it may have been prepared for his use' and he 'may have worked over it'.[73] It seems more likely to have been published under his name in order, like earlier exclusive polemics, to capitalise on Mahomet's continuing saleability.[74] Given their many similarities, the *Life of Mahomet* attributed to Ralegh and the 'Life and Death of Mahomet' that prefaces the Alcoran may, feasibly, have stemmed from the same pen.

Alongside familiar accusations – all present in the Ralegh text – concerning Mahomet's base mercantile origins and illiteracy, his mixing of Christianity and Judaism, the cynical wooing of 'Aijssa' and use of the falling sickness, his sensual paradise and lasciviousness and his unfulfilled promise to rise again after death, the anonymous compiler of *The Alcoran of Mahomet* places considerable emphasis on two factors. The first is Mahomet's use of violence to secure his own power and the expansion of his new sect. The second is liberty. Mahomet enfranchised his own slave as an example to others, and deliberately attached his 'reformed Religion' to 'that other concomitant in popular disturbances, liberty, proclaiming it to be the will of God, that all men should enjoy it'.[75] The implicit parallel here is with Cromwell and his Parliamentary army, whose force of arms and ostensibly radical politics (both the monarchy and the House of Lords were abolished in 1649) lead the anonymous writer of *The Famous Tragedie of Charles I* in the same year to identify a Machiavellian Cromwell and 'his preacher accomplice' Hugh Peters with 'Mahomet and

his pliant Monke' Sergius – a parallel that would resurface in the royalist satires that followed the Restoration.[76] It seems that in the heady climate of 1649, for some royalist writers at least, Mahomet had not just learned to speak English, but had become a Parliamentarian as well.

Ross picks up on the same theme, albeit in a more subtle fashion, in his following 'Caveat'. 'Good Reader', he begins, 'the great *Arabian* Imposter now at last after a thousand years, is by way of *France* arrived in *England*'. As the translator had suggested, and as Ross states throughout, this is no cause for alarm: he supposes that the Alcoran 'or gallimaufry of Errors' has now been 'exposed […] to the publick view' just as any African monster might be, 'for people to gaze, not to dote upon'. Just as

> the sight of a Monster or mishapen creature should induce the beholder to praise God, who hath not made him such; so should the reading of this Alcoran excite us both to bless God's goodness towards us in this Land, who enjoy the glorious light of the Gospel, and behold the truth in the beauty of holiness […][77]

Ross is inordinately fond of, and acknowledges, the heavy-handed use of antiperistasis, a device through which the qualities of one element are heightened through reference to its antithesis. Thus Mahomet and the Alcoran are likened to 'the braying of an Ass' in opposition to 'a Consort of Musick' or like a 'Black-More' when set against a 'beautiful body' – there are numerous examples. This rhetorical tactic effectively creates the world of absolute certainties that a refutation requires, while harking back to the tone adopted in the surrounding material of both the Ketton and the Bibliander editions – the confidence of late-twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century polemic. Certainly many of the features of the earlier lives, and of the immediately preceding life, are repeated by Ross: Mahometanism is a cynical composite, his Mahomet a fabricator of miracles, lacking education and languages, a false prophet who did not rise after death as promised. He is instead the scourge of a Christian God, with Ross asserting as Erasmus had done that the plague of Locusts that afflicted the Egyptians now signified '*Mahomet* that great destroyer'.[78]

Yet Ross's persistent antiperistasis does not hold; it lacks the assurance of earlier writings and is out of place in the relativistic climate signalled by Purchas, battled by Bunyan and later explored by Stubbe. As with much of the surrounding material to *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, this reads like a rearguard action, an attempt to demonstrate Mahomet's infidelity by emphatically producing his debased doctrine in full. However, using the polemical language of heresy bequeathed him by earlier editions of the Alcoran and by Purchas and Bedwell, Ross invariably slides

into the degenerative relativism of the times – a position he would apparently embrace in his later *Pansebeia, or, A view of all Religions in the world* (1653).[79] After all, like Bibliander before him, Ross is in the unenviable position of having to defend the publication of the Alcoran while at the same time needing to refute it absolutely. So to 'staid and solid Christians' reading the Alcoran can be no more dangerous 'then the reading of those Errors recorded in Scripture' such as the 'damnable errors and abominations of the *Egyptians*, *Canaanites*, *Hittites*, *Sidonians*, and other *Gentiles*, and of the *Hebrews* themselves'. Furthermore, 'is there more danger in reading the Alcoran' he asks, 'than in reading the Errors of ancient and modern Hereticks?' Worse had been put forward by the '*Arians*, *Eutychians*, *Nestorians*, *Macedonians*, and others' and more pernicious opinions voiced by the '*Tetratheites*, *Angelites*, and *Theodosians* … or the *Gnosticks*, *Manicheans*, *Cerdonians*' and '*Marcionites*', all of which might be easily accessed by a literate public. Perhaps more pertinently, how bad can the Alcoran be considered when placed alongside contemporary heresies? Are they not exposed to the common view?

> Are not the damnable Heresies of the modern *Familists*, who deny Christ's Divinity, making as many Christs as there be illuminated in their Congregations? are not also the Heresies of the *Socinians*, *Anti-trinitarians*, *Adamites*, *Servetians*, *Antisabbatarians*, and many others exposed to the view of all that will read them? why then not the *Alcoran*?[80]

These were controversies that would run through into the following century, but Ross's point here is that Mahomet's tenets are in fact no more 'damnable' than a reader might see flourishing everywhere around them. Indeed, following the collapse of censorship in 1642, they might be found on any English bookstall alongside heresies of a different form in 'the modern Histories of the East and West *Indies*' or in 'the *Iewish* Talmud, and *Cabala*'.[81]

On the surface, Ross's argument that the beliefs of contemporary Protestant factions – many associated with the Parliamentary cause – are equal to, if not worse than, those of Mahometans seems no different from the dispute waged by More and Tyndale more than a century earlier concerning who was 'most like to Mahomet'. There are clear continuities, but also major differences. For More and Tyndale, Mahomet was indeed a faithless adversary, but he was an abstract one, primarily functioning as a satirical metaphor indicating heretical divergence. This remains true for Ross, but in his 'Caveat' he advocates the actual publication of Mahomet's doctrine, something neither More nor Tyndale would have dreamt of

doing. There are clear similarities between Ross's justification and that which Luther proffered for Bibliander's 1543 edition, yet Luther's was a belligerent battle cry for the vernacular translation of the Alcoran for the public to accept or reject, whereas Ross's is an attempt to regain doctrinal authority in a debased religious culture he sees descending into blind factional heresy. That the Parliamentary authorities – after some deliberation – allowed the publication of this controversial and implicitly royalist volume at all may suggest that they were persuaded of the value of Ross's 'Caveat' and the Alcoran as a means to encourage the re-establishment of an orthodox Anglican centre ground.[82] The final lines of the 'Caveat' acknowledge as much: 'what I have written here concerning the *Alcoran*, I submit to the judgment and wisdom of those who sit at the Stern, and can see more than the Passengers'.[83]

Another element in the 'Caveat' that focusses attention on the nature of 'true religion' is Ross's preoccupation with Mahomet's 'blasphemy' and 'lyes'. Mahomet indiscriminately blasphemes 'the Father', 'the Son', 'the Holy Ghost' and 'God also'. Worse, he brags that his name is written on the throne of God, 'in that he is the greatest of the Prophets, who hath more knowledge than all the Men and Angels of the world, and many other bragging words he uttereth of himself'. Mahomet lied in fabricating his miracles but, as Ross relentlessly enumerates, he also 'belyeth' God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Virgin Mary, the Gospel, the Jews, the Patriarchs and the Apostles in the Alcoran, which is assumed to be unequivocally his own creation. This argument leads to a final, emphatic conclusion regarding who was the true author of the Alcoran:

> not the God of Truth, but the Father of Lyes; not Christ and his Apostles, whose weapons in propagating the Gospel, were powerful Preaching, Miracles, and patience in Suffering; not the Sword, the chief means that Mahomet useth to force his Alcoran, an instrument forbid by Christ, but used by him who hath been a murtherer from the beginning […][84]

'The father of lies' (John 8:14) is Satan, speaking through Mahomet. Satan is active in the world through Mahometanism – as suggested by Bunyan – and Ross's emphasis falls squarely on deceit and violence, the two human characteristics that had increasingly come to define the figure of Mahomet across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the immediate context of 1649, for royalists at least, deceit and violence must have defined the tenor of the times, and *The Alcoran of Mahomet* exploits the Christian mythology surrounding Mahomet and the Alcoran to press for political and theological orthodoxy.

The demonic supernatural forces embodied in Mahomet at the start of the sixteenth century in a text like *Here begynneth a lytell treatise of the turkes lawe called Alcaron* lurk on the fringes of *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, but have been supplanted, first by the 'false prophet' of the later sixteenth century, and in 1649 by 'Mahomet's Imposture'. The ubiquity of this latter term by the middle of the seventeenth century indicates a new development in the history of this shape-shifting figure, a development that responds to earlier religious conflict, comes to prominence in the fractures of civil discord and points towards Enlightenment controversies.

II. IMPOSTURAE

The speed with which Mahomet became wholly defined by imposture is striking. Of those seventeenth-century texts already discussed, almost all define Mahomet through reference to imposture. Purchas describes him as the 'cunning impostor and seducer of the World' and disapprovingly notes how his fabrication of divinity leads common people to be seduced by what are described as his 'impostures and iugling devises'.[85] In his *Life of Mahomet* 'Ralegh' similarly identifies the fabrication of a religion to be the root of imposture. In a familiar narrative, Sergius 'cunningly shewed' Mahomet the way 'to smoothe his past errors without scandal' and how to 'compose a new treatise, collected out of the old and new Testament (with devised additions that should give credit to his Doctrine and humor the hearers)'. Resisting this 'new Religion', some of the 'wiser sort' in Arabia turned on Mahomet, calling him 'an Imposter' and 'reproving his hypocrisie'.[86] Ross utilises the same term a number of times, first in his opening sentence as he refers to the arrival of 'the great Arabian Impostor' in England, and later in terms of the 'tyranny of this grand Impostor'.[87] Only Bunyan makes no reference to the term, but that is surely because he is questioning the very basis of Mahomet's imposture – he certainly uses the language of imposture when doubting the veracity of St Paul.

It is, however, Bedwell who is generally accepted as offering the definitive identification of the prophet with this concept. The very title of his work makes this abundantly clear – the *Mohammedis imposurae* – and Bedwell is again positioned as a key driver of scholarly and wider public attitudes to Mahomet, but in this case his influence is exaggerated. While his bold title was influential, Bedwell did not invent Mahometan imposture: rather he seized upon it as a useful tagline that would catch a reader's eye in the competitive print market, using the Latinate novelty of *Mohammedis* alongside *Imposturae* to display his scholarly credentials

and capitalise, as many writers and printers before and after him did, on the marketable value of Mahomet on a titlepage. Purchas had picked up imposture two years earlier and used it in his *Pilgrimage*, but he had lifted it directly from an earlier translation. The origins of this specific use of the term, and indeed of the word itself, lie earlier, and ultimately across the Channel in France.

There are two late-sixteenth-century examples of Mahometanism as imposture in English; both attach the term directly to Mahomet and both are translations of continental originals. The first, already mentioned, occurs in the life included in Louis LeRoy's popular *Of the Interchangeable Course, or Variety of Things*, originally published in French in 1575 and in English in 1594. LeRoy writes of the way in which Mahomet turned from calling himself merely 'a Captaine chosen by military fauour' to using the 'pretext of diuinity in his action[n]s' to represent himself as 'the prophet and messenger of almighty God' to the end that 'vnder colour of this imposture, al men should obey him the more willingly'.[88] The second, and Purchas's direct source, is Giles Fletcher's influential compendium of translated material, *The Policy of the Turkish Empire* (1597). As reflected in Purchas, Fletcher focusses upon Mahomet's manipulation of the religious naivety of the 'common people', pointing out that, once 'seduced by his impostures and iugling deuises', they 'did not onely repute and esteeme him for a Prophet, but they attributed vnto him reuerence more than humane, with diuine honours'.[89] Variants of imposture were also being used regularly in French polemic in this period, a flavour of which is offered by Florimond de Raemond in his *L'Antichrist* (1597):

> Ce redoubtable enemy de Dieu, ceste peste du monde, cest adversaire de l'Eglise, qui luy tient quasi le pied sur la gorge, ce faux Prophete imposteur, execrable Mahomet, peste de tant d'hommes, ruine de tant d'ames, a esté si abominable, si meschant, si comblé de vices, si pernicieux au royaume de Jesus-Christ, que plusieurs ont eu opinion qu'il estoit l'Antichrist.
>
> This redoubtable enemy of God, this plague of the world, this adversary of the Church, as if his foot were on its throat, this false imposter Prophet, execrable Mahomet, plague of so many men, ruin of so many souls, has been so abominable, so wicked, so replete with vices, so pernicious to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that several people have believed him to be the Antichrist.[90]

Raemond imagines Mahomet in terms of the contemporary threat posed to Christendom by the Ottoman 'Turks', in whom he is embodied. The use of 'imposteur' here emphasises Mahomet's deliberate fabrication of divinity and his cynical construction of religion. It also reproduces the terms of the religious conflict raging in late-sixteenth-century France – the

resonance of 'imposter' in English writing of the 1640s and 1650s is part of an ongoing challenge to the ideal of the militant Christian. There is no longer any emphasis on the supernatural powers of the earlier 'nygromancer' Mahomet, or any suggestion of the idol Mahomet popular in page and stage romances at the end of the sixteenth century; imposture is the culmination of a trend, well underway in the earliest printed texts in English, of denying a divine Mahomet by focussing upon the means by which he created an illusion of divinity that prompted civil unrest and armed struggle. Mahomet was erroneously approached as a kind of Christ, before being relentlessly castigated for his supposed shortcomings in that role. Imposture is the seventeenth-century equivalent of the mortal medieval heresiarch, or the sixteenth-century 'false prophet', coupled with newly sophisticated source material and a dose of popular Machiavellianism.

These examples give some sense of the history of Mahomet's imposture and of its meaning, but they do not explain its near-ubiquity by the end of the seventeenth century. For this, an examination of its etymology and earlier usage is necessary. In English, as the *OED* indicates, the word itself derives through the French emposture/imposture from the late Latin *impostura*, based on the verb 'to impose'. One of its earliest occurrences in English is John Hardyng's *Chronicle* (1543), which describes the 'mere impostures and craftie illusions' employed by the pretender to Henry VIII's throne, Perkin Warbeck.[91] This use is confirmed in Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus* of 1565, which defines 'imposter' as 'a seller of false wares: a coniurer: a iuggler', while 'Impostura, imposturae' is defined as 'Fraude: guile; lieger de maine: deceit in buying and selling'.[92] Its use in this period in reference to witchcraft and to astrology demonstrates the way in which fraud might be achieved through devious mystification. John Cotta, for instance, writes in 1612 of 'the shamelesse dayly cousenage and imposture, heathenishly practised by many, vnder the colour, pretext and false shadowes of true Astronomy', and in 1616 offers a useful definition:

> The Impostor is he who pretendeth truth, but intendeth falshood. For this cause sometimes vnder an holy pretense, he maketh God the Author of his vnholy prestigiation, and slandereth God vnto his face. Sometimes to be reputed an Angell of light, he maketh himselfe a license to counterfet the Diuell. He proposeth it his trade to seduce, and liueth by lying. Sometimes in shew and pollicitation hee is a Witch, but in the performance of the greater sinne hee is lesse iust, and in the personate resemblance solely a Iuggler. For as the Witch performeth that which in true, and infallible reason is transcendent and aboue nature; so the

Impostor performeth that which in false and fallible reason and opinion, onely seemeth parallel.[93]

Cunning deceit – 'juggling' in contemporary parlance – was easily transferred from one who seduced individuals through witchcraft to one who used such tactics to seduce people on a much grander scale, in the service of a 'false' religion. Linking the two, Thomas Ady, writing on Mahomet in 1655, refers to him as a 'grand Witch of the World' who 'by his Juglings and Divinations hath seduced a great part of the World to an Idolatrous worship'.[94]

Yet Mahomet's 'lawe' was not the religion initially defined by imposture. By the late sixteenth century, the papacy and Roman Catholicism represented the principal opposition to Protestant England in both military and theological terms. Given that Protestant polemicists had long connected Mahomet and Roman Catholicism through a common emphasis on the fabrication of scripture and divinity, it is not surprising that imposture was applied to both the papacy and to Mahomet. It is inconceivable that William Bedwell's influential use of *imposturae* in his title was not in some measure prompted by the success and multiple editions of the Archbishop of York, Samuel Harsnett's *A declaration of egregious popish impostures* (1603), written at the command of the Privy Council, a theme later continued in Thomas Morton's *Imposture of the Church of Rome* (1626).

Harsnett's imposture is focussed upon renegade Catholic priests in England performing fake exorcisms – those 'grand Imposters and enchaunters of your soules' – but addresses what he considers the greater tragedy of Catholicism in England. For 'who can but bleede in hart, to see you a farre bewitched on our imposturising renegadoes, that come fresh fro[m] the Popes tyring house, masked with the vizard of holy burning zeale'?[95] A desire to unmask or to discover is a regularly voiced accompaniment to declarations of imposture, and gives some sense of the way this formulation characterises both Mahometanism and Roman Catholicism as frauds enacted upon an incredulous populace. Once it has been disproved and revealed, its fraudulence then affirms the true faith. By the 1620s, a specifically Protestant conception of imposture had emerged that might be manoeuvred to unmask either 'Turks' or papists – a conception which implicitly privileged a Protestant emphasis on authentic scripture in the vernacular and an individual's unmediated relationship with God. The simplification of imposture as an unmasking also explains the new title of William Bedwell's second edition, changed from *Mohammedis*

imposturae to the more popularly accessible, but equivalent, *Mahomet vnmasked* (1624).[96]

The coalescence of Roman Catholic and Mahometan in Protestant conceptions of imposture comes to the fore in the polemical literature of the English Civil Wars. Royalist propagandising had, in the context of the publication of *The Alcoran of Mahomet* (1649), conflated Cromwell with Mahomet. Parliamentarian writing, epitomised in the work of John Milton, responded by using imposture to conflate Charles I with Mahomet. In the immediate wake of the regicide the *Eikon Basilike*, or *The Pourtrature of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings* appeared, a volume masquerading as royal autobiography which, Kevin Sharpe has argued, 'towered over the literature of 1649'. What most damaged parliamentarian efforts to suppress the celebration and maintenance of the king's memory was not so much the text but rather, as Sharpe continues, 'its visual evocation and the power of its emblematic frontispiece' (Figure 20).[97] This frontispiece, depicting Charles as a martyr humbly accepting his crown of thorns and receiving heavenly approbation surrounded by supporting allegorical devices, was widely circulated and became a powerful relic in its own right. Milton was enlisted to attack this iconic threat, first in his *Eikonoklastes* (1649), in which he derided the royalists as an 'inconstant, irrational, and Image-doting rabble', and then in *The life and reigne of King Charls, or, The pseudo-martyr discovered* (1651).

Milton's purpose in *The life and reigne* was to attack the veneration of Charles in the *Eikon Basilike*, to expose 'the true dimensions of this Sainted King and innocent Martyr' and to 'pull off that false vizzard wherewith his juggling partie hath deckt his Effigies, and presented him to the publick view'.[98] Immediately a polemical language of imposture and unmasking, coupling Roman Catholic idolatry with Mahomet's cynical fabrication of divinity, is brought into play. And it is the frontispiece to the *Eikon* that is Milton's primary concern – the 'grand imposture of the Kings Pourtracture'.[99] It is the 'wonder of the times' that royalists can present this book

> with his picture praying in the Frontispiece, purposely to catch and amuse the people, magnifying all his misdeeds for pious actions, canonizing him for a Saint, and idolizing his memory for an innocent Martyr, an imposture without other parallell than that of *Mahomet* […][100]

The *Eikon* is thus little more than a cynical ploy designed to create the impression of divinity from a life of lofty disdain, misgovernment and



Figure 20. Frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike, or, The Pourtrature of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings* (London, 1649). Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, SYN.8.64.11(1).

irresponsibility. Milton finds it breathtaking in its attempt to rewrite history, and its only equivalent is the imposture of Mahomet.[101] He goes further. If we are to imagine Charles's 'Poutracture and Image' as his monument and tomb, then it is clear that its compilers and publishers have

> stolen the pattern from *Mecha*, and to hang it in that his ayrery Mahometan regality, supported by this their impostured Loadstone, whereby to present his sacred memory, in his Solitudes, to posterity, surely it may be suspected, they were not so exactly their Crafts-masters, or so much his friends as foes, to Saint him before his time, and in such a shrine, as necessarily must render him to future times (infamous) an imparralelld dissembler, and a greater deceiver than *Mahomet* ever was […][102]

Milton's conceit presents the royalists doing more harm than good in making this text Charles's monument, holding it aloft as medieval legends had Mahomet's tomb hanging in Mecca. Just as Christian posterity had seen through Mahomet's imposture, so it would discredit Charles's assumed sainthood and instead of glorious martyrdom adorn his monument with 'Epitaphes of impiety, injustice, blood and rapine' – more images of violence. Surely no man could be taken in by such absurdity, Milton asserts, but those who were must be out of their wits and suit 'an Asian beliefe' better than 'an European faith' and 'a gallymaufried Alcoran, rather than a true and rationall Remonstrance, drest with no other Rethorick than the naked truth'.[103] With the late king portrayed as a contemporary Mahomet, and the *Eikon* as his Alcoran, Milton attempts to demonstrate the true scale of royalist infidelity and its disastrous consequences. That he does so in reference to the recently published *Alcoran of Mahomet*, utilising Ross's own 'gallimaufry' in the process, indicates the way in which the *Alcoran*'s original royalist orthodoxy had been conscripted into a parliamentarian attack on royalist iconography.

The currency of Mahomet and the Alcoran was again used by Andrew Marvell in his laudatory poem, 'The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector', written between late December 1654 and early January 1655. Marvell's interest in imposture and its associations is implicit rather than explicit, and his polemical targets a mixture of religious radicals under the banner of the Fifth Monarchists. Turning to such matters, he writes:

> Yet such a *Chammish* issue still does rage,
> The Shame and Plague both of the Land and Age,
> Who warch'd [watched] thy halting, and thy Fall deride,
> Rejoycing when thy Foot had slipt aside;
> That their new King might the fifth Scepter shake,
> And make the World, by his Example, Quake:
> Whose frantique Army should they want for Men
> Might muster Heresies, so one were ten.
> What thy Misfortune, they the Spirit call,
> And their Religion only is to Fall.
> Oh *Mahomet!* now couldst thou rise again,
> Thy Falling-sickness should have made thee Reign,
> While *Feake* and *Simpson* would in many a Tome,
> Have writ the Comments of thy sacred Foame:
> For soon thou mightst have past among their Rant
> Wer't but for thine unmoved Tulipant;
> As thou must needs have own'd them of thy band
> For prophecies fit to be *Alcorand*.[104]

Marvell depicts a marginal group of religious fanatics, implacably opposed to the Protector and rejoicing as they imagine the holy spirit impeding his progress. They seek the Second Coming and the wielding of the fifth sceptre, they are prepared to use military force to press their theological views and they quake before their God. This group is specifically castigated for celebrating Cromwell's 'fall' – a serious coaching accident in September 1654 – which they portray as a divine intervention that will bring the fifth monarchy to pass.[105]

Marvell proceeds to deride them as a 'frantique' group whose army contains more heresies than it does men, and finds an apposite parallel in Mahomet and the recently published *Alcoran of Mahomet*. As with the translator's address to the reader, and Alexander Ross's 'Caveat' from that work, Marvell imagines Mahomet newly invigorated, rising amongst the English in the aftermath of the Civil Wars. Were Mahomet indeed to rise once more, and war return to England, he would surely find eager disciples amongst the Fifth Monarchists: the falling sickness which he claimed was divine revelation would guarantee him power over those whose only religion was to quake and 'to fall'. Marvell further relishes his vision of the two Fifth Monarchist leaders, Christopher Feake and John Simpson, slavishly recording the product of Mahomet's 'sacred foam' – his epileptic ranting. Were it not for Mahomet's 'unmoved Tulipant' (an unwillingness to remove his turban), he would be their ideal messiah, for their prophecies, like Mahomet's before them, are only fit 'to be *Alcorand*'. It is once more Mahomet's – and thus the Fifth Monarchists' – imposture that is Marvell's focus, the fabrication of divinity and the pretence of religious faith and conviction.

Marvell's connection between Mahomet's supposed manufacture of divine revelation and contemporaries quaking before God was extended beyond the Fifth Monarchists to the Quakers by other writers. The nature of Quaker radicalism is demonstrated in the way in which they are made equivalent with Mahomet:

> a sect of woemen (they are at Southworke) come from beyond the Sea, called quakers, and these swell, shiver and shake, and when they come to themselves (for in all this fit Mahomett's holy-ghost hath bin conversing with them) they begin to preach what hath been delivered them by the Spirit.[106]

Bernadette Andrea has noted the compelling link established here between 'these women's resistance to the injunction to maintain silence in public and stereotypical views of Islam'.[107] Like Feake and Simpson – and others – these groups' physical response to God marked them out as heirs to Mahomet and his supposed epilepsy, and thus fakers of revelation.

However, the Quakers differed from the Fifth Monarchists and other groups in the way they responded to conflation with Mahomet. Having 'clear[ed] her conscience' before Ottoman ruler Mehmed IV in June 1658, celebrated Quaker Mary Fisher was asked what she thought of 'their Prophet Mahomet'. She responded carefully:

> *That she knew him not; but Christ the true Prophet the Son of God, who was the Light of the World, and enlightened every Man coming into the World, him she knew.* And concerning *Mahomet* she said, *That they might judge of him to be true or false, according to the Words and Prophecies he spoke*; saying farther, *If the Word that a prophet speaketh come to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord hath sent that Prophet; but if it come not to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord never sent him.*[108]

Fisher's statement may reflect 'broad-mindedness and tact', but it also reveals conceptions of Mahomet current in mid-seventeenth-century England.[109] Under the pretence of not knowing Mahomet, Fisher encourages her Ottoman audience to look to his '*Words and Prophecies*' – elements that in Christian writings affirm his imposture. According to the mythologies of Mahomet repeated in the *Alcoran* of 1649, nothing that Mahomet promised – including his own resurrection – came to pass, and his words had been exhaustively demonstrated to be false. Fisher's seemingly innocent assertion of an impartial measure of divine truthfulness indicates a misconception of the role of the prophet but, more importantly, was an exercise in evangelical rhetoric.

A subtly different strategy is employed by the leading Quaker George Fox in his letter *To the Great Turk and his king at Argiers*, printed in 1680. Heavily reliant on *The Alcoran of Mahomet* – which he quotes at length – and probably influenced by Fisher's mission, Fox writes to protest at the imprisonment of fellow Quakers at Algiers. In his earlier work Fox had repeatedly conflated Mahomet with the papacy, but this letter instead acknowledges the apparently legitimate authority of Mahomet amongst the Mahometans, as well as a shared Judeo-Christian heritage.[110] Fox calls as witness to his accusations, 'John, the Son of Zachariah, that did affirm Christ to be the Messiah, and to be the Word of God, that great, and chaste, just Prophet, and Mary the Mother of Jesus Christ, with all his Holy Apostles, and your own Mahomet that writ your Alcoran'.[111] Affirming John to be chaste and just may be a slight on Mahomet, whom English writing regularly asserted to be neither, but placing Mahomet at the end of such a list does – even if for a specific Mahometan audience – affirm a divinely ordained role. Mahomet is no longer the great imposter.

Fox goes on to preface numerous points with 'as *Mahomet* saith in your *Alcoran*' and invokes Mahomet's moral authority, asking:

> Did ever Mahomet give you Authority to rob, spoil, and take the Goods of them that do you no harm, and keep Captives the bodies of them, and sell them, or to beat upon the feet, belly, or back, them which are so taken, to make them promise more money for their Ransoms than they are able [..?][112]

Although Fox carefully defines Mahomet's doctrine and the Alcoran as separate from 'the Law of the great God' elsewhere, here he acknowledges a relative legitimacy that reflects contemporary tolerationist debates and Bunyan's crisis. Fox's letter also indicates that the *Alcoran of Mahomet* was being used in ways that Alexander Ross could not have anticipated in 1649. As in the initial Reformation debates of the 1530s, polemically associating dissident religious groups with Mahomet encouraged new ways of thinking about Mahomet and Mahometans. Those defined as imposters had a vested interest in redefining imposture.

If Mahomet had become an almost tangible presence in England in the wake of the publication of *The Alcoran of Mahomet* in 1649, it was a consequence of a number of conjoined factors: the political and theological upheavals that made imposture seem omnipresent; a pervasive rhetoric of the world 'turned upside down' and the repositioning of Mahomet that resulted; and, in consequence, the questions that were being asked by men like John Bunyan and George Fox of orthodox religious belief and the nature of divinity through the figure of Mahomet. Mahometan imposture can, as a result, be placed at the heart of debates that would subsequently generate 'Enlightenment' questions. Rather than dying away with the Restoration of 1660, imposture only proliferated. Opinions began to be expressed that took the imposture routinely ascribed to Mahomet and Mahometanism and used it to scrutinise all organised religion, hence the appearance of *De Tribus Impostoribus* (*The Treatise of the Three Imposters*) which applied the same principle to Christ and Moses as to Mahomet. It was as if Bunyan's crisis of faith could suddenly be resolved in not one, but three possible ways. Firstly, as he concluded, that the authority of the gospel proved Christianity to be the truth; secondly, that Mahomet was indeed the 'right way' and Christianity was false; and finally, that neither Christ nor Mahomet were to be believed, and all was imposture. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, all three opinions – two of them, if not inconceivable, then certainly unprintable a century before – had been publicly expressed in print.

One example of the orthodox backlash against newly elastic conceptions of imposture, and a demonstration of the continued need for its redefinition, can be found in an influential volume by Humphrey Prideaux, Dean of Norwich. Titled *The True Nature of Imposture fully displayed in the life of Mahomet. With a discourse annex'd, for the vindication of Christianity from this charge* (1697), it passed through eight English editions by 1723 and was subsequently republished across the world.[113] Its title does not disguise Prideaux's purpose in writing this life of Mahomet – he is interested in defining 'true' imposture in order to vindicate Christianity from the accusation. Perhaps inevitably, a battle to maintain Mahomet's imposture had become a battle to defend Christ's divinity. *The True Nature of Imposture* intervenes in the Deist controversies that had been triggered by the publication of a number of Unitarian texts in the 1690s, and accelerated by John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* (1696), a text which the Anglican Convocation resolved to suppress, asserting that it was 'a book of pernitious principalls, and of dangerous consequence to the Christian Religion' written with the intent to 'subvert the fundamentall articles of the Christian faith'.[114] Toland's book was not the origin of what was often called Deism – a belief that a divine creator might be apprehended by reason and observation of the natural world, and opposed to organised religion – but the continuation of a vigorous public debate, regularly engaging with Mahomet, that would last until the 1740s. Prideaux's point is that too many people have confidently taken it upon themselves 'to call Christianity a Cheat, and an Imposture, without ever having considered what an Imposture is'. His solution is to offer 'the Life of that famous Impostor, who is on both sides equally acknowledged to be such', and thus demonstrate that 'none of those Marks and Properties, which are so visible in the Imposture of *Mahomet*, and must be also in all other Impostures in Religion, can possibly be charged upon that holy Religion which we profess'.[115] The prevalence of impostures in the realm encouraged him to imagine that God may 'raise up some Mahomet against us for our utter confusion'; once more the prophet was summoned into being in seventeenth-century England.[116]

In the appended *Letter to the Deists*, where Prideaux declares his intent, we find his fullest definition of imposture. Addressing his opponents directly, Prideaux begins:

> An *Imposture*, taking the word in the full latitude of its signification, may denote any *lye* or *cheat*, whereby one Man imposeth upon another. But it is most frequently used to express such *cheats* as are imposed on us by those who come

with false *characters* of themselves, pretending to be what they are not in order to delude and deceive. And when this *character*, which is thus falsely assumed, is no less than a pretended *Embassy* from Heaven, and under the credit of it a New *Religion* is delivered to the World as coming from *God*, which is nothing else but a *Forgery*, invented by the first Propagators of it, to impose a cheat upon mankind, it amounts to be an *Imposture* in that sense, in which you would have the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ* to be such.[117]

Prideaux asserts the importance of Mahomet as a yardstick for infidelity – 'as we all acknowledge' – before moving on to define specifically the 'marks and characters' of imposture:

Now the *Marks* and *Characters* which I look on to be inseperable from every such *Imposture*, are these following: 1. That it must always have for its end some carnal interest. 2. That it can have none but wicked Men for the Authors of it. 3. That both these must necessarily appear in the very contexture of the *Imposture* it self. 4. That it can never be so framed, but that it must contain some palpable falsities, which will discover the falsity of all the rest. 5. That where-ever it is first propagated, it must be done by craft and fraud. 6. That when entrusted with many conspirators, it can never be long concealed: And, 7. That it can never be established, unless backed with force and violence. That all these must belong to every *Imposture*, and all particularly did so to *Mahometism*; and that none of them can be charged upon *Christianity*, is what I shall now proceed to shew you of each of them in their order.[118]

For all his claims to be defining a general concept of imposture, Prideaux's 'marks and characters' are extrapolated directly from Mahomet and Mahometanism. He acknowledges as much in his final sentence. The emphasis on carnality, wickedness, fraud and violence – all prominent elements of the Christian life of Mahomet since its earliest incarnations – coupled with a lack of detailed reference to any imposture other than Mahomet's, affirms this. The contemporary impostures that Prideaux does rail against are, predictably, those of the demonised Deists: he imagines the new Mahomet risen in England to be embodied in 'the Socinian, the Quaker, and the Deist' and argues that the real motivation that leads 'the Atheist to deny the Being of God, and the Epicurean Deist his Government over us' is that they may 'give themselves up, without fear of future Judgment, to all those Bestial Enjoyments of Lust and Sensuality which their corrupt Hearts carry them after'.[119] Prideaux attempts to force a consensus on Mahomet's role and life in order to attack his opponents and defend his conception of Christianity. The Deists become, as both Protestants and Catholics had been in the previous century, 'most like to Mahomet'.

As a means of characterising an individual who manipulates others under the pretence of religious conviction, imposture has its antecedents in sixteenth-century political intrigues and in early-seventeenth-century anti-Roman Catholic polemic. In a period in which there was a proliferation of individuals claiming privileged access to god and the true faith, and the simultaneous development of a publicly expressed skepticism towards organised religion, it is hardly surprising imposture becomes so pervasive. Its rise is a particularly Protestant consequence of the ongoing Reformation and its internal divisions and divisiveness; imposture replaces the earlier Catholic terminology in which Mahomet and Mahometanism had been contained. Heresy and its associated lexicon had been the standard approach since at least the thirteenth century in theological writings, and for Alexander Ross, for instance, imposture is a kind of virulent heresy. But as a deliberate manipulation by an individual, it is also more than heresy – heresy at least retained the possibility of personal conviction in error. Imposture is, in this sense, a product of Protestant individualism coupled with a popular Machiavellianism. It is also exclusive, a tool for a dominant orthodoxy to denounce and undermine religious dissent. Diarmaid MacCulloch has written of the 'difficulty' of heresy for the sixteenth-century religious reformers – it was, after all, a term routinely levelled at them by Roman Catholics.[120]

Imposture's rise to dominance at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century is a Protestant response to that 'difficulty'. It might not be easy to demonstrate the heretical nature of the papacy given the weight of tradition and authority embodied in the office, but to prove the pope an imposter and his church an imposture – with Mahomet the benchmark – was straightforward and easily communicable in terms of popular polemic. Once more Mahomet was manoeuvered into a position that rendered him a mute pawn in a crisis of Christian heterodoxy. Yet by the late seventeenth century, as the multiple 'sightings' of Mahomet in post–Civil War England suggest, the prophet was far from mute in circumstances that were different from those a century earlier. Dissident writers like Henry Stubbe and later John Toland began to initiate attempts to reclaim Mahomet – an unprecedented development.

III. A STUPENDOUS REVOLUTION

Decades before Bunyan's personal crisis of faith, in 1635, Adam Islip published a substantial and curious text by Thomas Heywood, titled simply *The hierarchie of the blessed angells*.[121] A rarely studied, esoteric and

visionary work, Heywood's text covers a wide range of topics but settles on the contentious issue of religion in a chapter he calls 'The Vertues'. He begins:

> Besides the Sects, the Schismes, and Heresies,
> Vaine Adorations, and Idolatries;
> There have been three Religions, 'boue the rest
> And those ev'n to these later Times exist,
> The Iew, the Christian, and Mahumetist.[122]

But which of the three Abrahamic monotheisms – the 'religions of the Book' – is 'the onely pure, / And without error'? Having acknowledged each to be a religion rather than a sect, as was increasingly common in the seventeenth century, Heywood enables both Jew and Mahometan to demonstrate the insufficiencies of their belief. Although a shared religious heritage is pre-eminent, the Jew is overly proud and denies responsibility for the death of Christ, although his nation has been scattered and enslaved, while the Mahometan boasts of Ottoman conquest, ridicules Christian belief in 'a Sonne' and his sobriety, piety and anti-idolatrous beliefs are used once again to damn lax Christians. Having given the Mahometan ample space to articulate his religion without comment, Heywood then turns to an earlier source – almost certainly Riccoldo da Montecroce – to relate a derogatory and acerbic life of Mahomet that proves the truth of Protestant Christianity. The questions concerning relations between monotheisms that Heywood asks are relevant and provocative – although a degree of religious interconnection had been pointed out much earlier by William of Auvergne and Roger Bacon – and they prefigure Bunyan's later crisis. In answering them Heywood falls back in each case on assumptions and source material that are centuries old. One element of Heywood's book that raises more troubling issues regarding Mahomet is the extraordinary accompanying illustration titled 'The Vertves' that was drawn by the otherwise anonymous 'Gulielm Beescam' (Figure 21).

The image depicts the monotheistic coexistence asserted in Heywood's opening quotation. Yet while the artificial parameters of Heywood's imagined disputation ensure both the undermining and confutation of Jew and Mahometan – as well as Roman Catholic – the image is further suggestive. The upper half of the piece is dominated by the ascension of a winged figure, presumably the Angel Gabriel, with a reed in his left hand and a martyr's crown of thorns in his right. Above, radiating light, is the holy spirit in the form of a dove – across these rays of light is



Figure 21. 'The Vertves' – Thomas Heywood, *The hierarchie of the blessed angells* (London: Adam Islip, 1635) p. 270. © The British Library Board, 1653/530.

written 'Sancti Vulnere Virescuntt', a variation on 'virescit vulnere virtus' or 'strength flourishes in hardship', but here adapted to 'they who flourish in the holy wound'. To Gabriel's left hang eight cherubic putti, and to his right are seven classical deities, enfolded in clouds. The lower, earthly

half of the image is distinctly different. At its centre, directly below the dove, appears Christ on the cross, the Adamic skull and bones at its foot a convention of Calvary representations. To the right sits Moses, looking to the crucified Christ, against whom leans the tablets of the ten commandments. To the left of Christ, seated beneath a large tree, is the figure of Mahomet, turbanned and erroneously writing the Alcoran.[123] Behind all three looms a walled city surrounded by hills that is undoubtedly intended to be Jerusalem, a location sacred to all three religions. For a text that devotes some energy to demonstrating the absurdity of the Alcoran and the imposture of Mahomet, here Mahomet sits in elevated company, with the primary emphasis placed on what connects these 'three Religions, 'bove the rest'. Beyond Jerusalem and the shared figure of Gabriel each is united in worship of the same God from whom all worldly power springs. Although not straightforwardly a Hermetic text, I want to suggest the influence of Giordano Bruno, and a strand of Hermeticism that claimed access to a purified perception of a universal God and sought to recognise religious commonalities. Bruno, in his *Spaccio del la Bestia Trionfante* (1584), had argued for the need to eradicate vice and promote the virtues – hence the title of the chapter and image – asserting that modern theology had corrupted a morally pure, natural and simple original.[124]

In the religious climate of 1635, such a message would have been considered heretical (Bruno had been executed for heresy in 1600), and this image only suggests Hermeticism. A detailed examination of the figure of Mahomet indicates conventional attempts to demonise (Figure 22). Immediately apparent is a devil behind Mahomet's shoulder, who appears to be retreating from the divinity of Christ. Such a devil, often whispering to him as he preaches, was a commonplace of medieval manuscript illustrations of Mahomet and, before him, Antichrist. It can also be seen in the woodcut that features in De Worde's *Here begynneth a lytell treatise of the turkes lawe called Alcaron* of around 1515 (Figure 9). That Mahomet writes the Alcoran is also important, emphatically, but erroneously, affirming his authorship as Purchas and Bedwell had done in previous decades – that he is writing with his left hand and with head down, not acknowledging Christ as Moses appears to be doing, may further indicate his depravity and the synthetic, constructed nature of his imposture. Finally, in the shadows beneath the table at which he writes lies a volume under his right foot, perhaps intended to represent the Bible and his contempt for it. So although the structure of the composition seems to offer the possibility of a Hermetic reading that sees both modern and classical systems of belief as essentially an expression of the same singular deity,



Figure 22. Detail from the bottom left of Figure 21. 'The Vertves' – Thomas Heywood, *The hierarchie of the blessed angells* (London: Adam Islip, 1635) p. 270.
© The British Library Board, 1653/530.

the detailing of Mahomet denies this possibility in favour of a single Christian, Christological, truth. A reconsideration of the adapted motto, 'they who flourish in the holy wound', and Christ's crown of thorns in Gabriel's hand indicate that it is 'they' – the Christians – who flourish as a result of Christ's sacrifice. It is they who are pre-eminent.

The layers of meaning in Heywood's image usefully introduce the preoccupations of the later seventeenth century and the culmination of the anti-Trinitarian/orthodox controversy. Figures such as Arthur Bury, William Freke, Stephen Nye, Henry Stubbe and John Toland turned to the history of non-Christian religions to argue for the corruption of contemporary Christianity, and, in Stubbe's case, for Mahomet as the true inheritor of an original Christianity, unpolluted by priestcraft or popery.[125] Humberto Garcia has persuasively suggested that this 'sympathetic identification with Islam' was a means for 'English radical Protestantism' to achieve 'historical, philosophical, and ideological coherence'.[126] John

Toland was furthermore closely engaged with the work of Giordano Bruno, covertly circulating manuscripts on Bruno's life and work in England and on the continent, and was involved in the translation and publication of Bruno's *Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante* in 1713.[127] John Edwards, Charles Leslie, Humphrey Prideaux and others, in opposition, variously equated anti-Trinitarianism, Unitarianism, Deism and Socinianism with Mahometanism and, while recognising Mahometan pretension to be the original, true faith, denied this possibility as nothing more than an imposture that Mahometans and Deists shared.

Other elements were folded into the Trinitarian controversies that dominated the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. English travellers continued to provide newly authentic material on Mahomet and Mahometan belief for eager printing presses, from Coryat, Sandys, Morrison and Blount early in the century to Paul Rycaut later.[128] Debates about toleration emerged from a persistent recognition of Ottoman tolerance but, as John Marshall has recognised, 'Islam' became 'central to tolerationist debates in England in the late seventeenth century because of the similarities alleged between Islam and anti-Trinitarianism'.[129] John Locke's *A letter concerning toleration* (1689), in which he argued 'neither *Pagan*, nor *Mahumetan*, nor *Iew*, ought to be excluded from the Civil Rights of the Commonwealth, because of his religion', was an influential and controversial intervention.[130] Locke was subsequently denounced by John Edwards for having a 'Mahometan faith', but his major contribution was, against prevailing opinion, to clearly distinguish Mahometanism from Christianity. The dominant Christian narrative had long asserted that Mahomet was a heretic – instead Locke argued that a '*Turk* is not, nor can be, either Heretick or Schismatick, to a *Christian*'.[131]

The complex interrelation of Trinitarian disputes, tolerationist debates, English Arabism and new information inflects the conventional form of the printed life of Mahomet in Lancelot Addison's *The First State of Mahumedism* (1678). Chaplain to the English garrison in Tangier from 1663 to 1670, Addison had been impressed by the devoutness of Moroccans first-hand.[132] Yet imposture remains prominent in Addison's account '*of the onely great Imposter, that ever continued so long prosperous in the* World', if only to enable him to encourage '*all Christian Magistrates into a timely suppression of False* Teachers' – presumably dissident religious groups in England.[133] Addison's royalist orthodoxy emerges elsewhere when, having narrated the origins of Mahomet's heretical 'sect', he describes how Mahomet 'so well managed his ambition and injustice, under the cloak of Religion, as never have any yet proved his Equal: the nearest and most

exact Transcript of this great Imposter was the late Usurper' – Oliver Cromwell.[134] The spurious and cynical nature of Mahomet's promises of 'Toleration and Indulgence' is also given close attention.[135]

Addison's *First State* may be conservative in political and religious terms, but in other respects it is at the cutting edge of new ideas concerning Mahomet. The emphasis on Mahomet's 'naughtiness' and 'diabolical hypocrisie' remains, but Addison's stated concern is – like Bedwell and Purchas earlier in the century – authenticity, to free his relation of Mahomet and his doctrine '*from many ridiculous but usual Stories concerning them* both*; which the present Mahumedans laugh at*', something he comes close to achieving.[136] Addison's strategy to achieve this begins, as in Bedwell's *Arabian trudgman*, with a newly authentic name: 'Mahumed'. With care, he compares '*European* Accounts' with '*Saracen* Writers of his life' and, having related Mahometan accounts of the washing of Mahomet's heart and his clothing in cloud, Addison addresses his reader directly:

> I shall not remark any thing upon these two stories, but leave it to the judgement of every Reader. Only give me leave to take notice, that whether such things really hapned, or not, it matters not much, while they are confidently believed by the *Mahumedans*, and entertained as no frail arguments to prove the excellency of their Prophet.[137]

The willingness to accede a relative legitimacy to Mahometan belief even when apparently absurd characterises the later seventeenth century, as in George Fox's letter *To the Great Turk* and Bunyan's doubts. Later Joseph Pitts, perhaps the first English convert to complete the *Hajj*, would record 'Mohammetan' religious practice in extraordinary detail, but would say almost nothing about 'Mohammet'. Pitts mirrored Addision in describing most English accounts as 'stuff'd with very great mistakes', but continued to affirm Mahomet's position as 'a vile and debauch'd *Imposter*', probably to emphasise Pitts' own return to Christianity.[138]

Mahomet's absence from an account in which one might expect him to feature prominently – Pitts's title promises *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans* – reinforces a sense that at the end of the seventeenth century, with new and detailed information contradicting the traditional depiction, writers were at a loss how to represent Mahomet without legitimating him. This legitimacy was also a key element to tolerationist debates, a product of new political circumstances and new ideas about religion. In his *First State*, Addison proceeds to offer a remarkably detailed account of Mahomet, with new emphasis on his

military campaigns and followers – reflecting similar preoccupations in his contemporaries Stubbe and Prideaux – but also on what Mahometans believe. For much of this material Addison relies on contemporary Arabist scholarship, particularly from Pococke and Hottinger, and thus demonstrates the new level of sophistication the life of Mahomet was attaining in England in the 1670s and 1680s.[139]

The place of new and detailed lives of Mahomet in a complex conflict of varying theological and political positions was, as Justin Champion has argued, 'a crucial movement in the development of the Enlightenment idea of religion'.[140] This development appears to have its opposing poles in Stubbe's *The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism* (c. 1671) and Prideaux's *The True Nature of Imposture fully displayed in the life of Mahomet* (1697). Strictly in terms of their presentation of the life of Mahomet, however, Stubbe and Prideaux have a great deal in common – it is the use to which each puts the life that separates them, and while that has some effect on emphasis and organisation, their similarities suggest a newly standardised English Mahomet who had much in common with Addison's portrayal. A comparison with the early English printed lives detailed in Chapter 1 of this book demonstrates a development in both intricacy and accuracy. This is a consequence of advances in available source material and the sophistication of its study, and is in part a result of both Stubbe and Prideaux having encountered at least some Arabic. As boys, both studied at Westminster School, where Richard Busby had introduced Arabic into the curriculum – and both take pains to indicate that learning. Stubbe enthusiastically indulges in etymological speculation and quotes Pococke's Oxford lectures, while Prideaux laments a shortage of Arabic books and would be offered the Regius professorship in Hebrew at Oxford after Pococke's death in 1691.[141] These boasts of linguistic facility should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt given Prideaux's comments on 'the Agreement which the *Arabick* hath with the *English*', there being apparently 'no Language in the World more a-kin to ours'.[142]

Nevertheless, the life they offer is both coherent and consistent. Both agree on Mahomet's origins and the nobility of his tribe, and differ by only one year on his birth – Prideaux's 571 to Stubbe's 570. They present the same stories of Mahomet's youth: that after the death of his parents and then his grandfather, he was taken into the care of his uncle, Abu Taleb, and was instructed in matters of trade and travel. Both recount an episode in which a youthful Mahomet meets with Bahira and his prophetic future is foretold; both detail his advantageous first marriage to Chadija/ Cadijha – but while Stubbe carefully justifies this

and Mahomet's involvement in trade and martial affairs, and excuses his poverty, Prideaux, in line with many earlier writers, finds this marriage to be a prime example of his relentless ambition. Both keenly follow his growing esteem and are interested in the way Christian division and malaise offered an opening for Mahomet's theological intervention. Yet Prideaux – again following earlier polemic – paints Mahomet as a cynical opportunist in this, tailoring his imposture to the tastes of his audience and crafting the Alcoran to this end with the assistance of a cabal of disaffected figures.

Conversely, Stubbe details Mahomet's wide experience of other religious cultures, his education and literacy – opposed to Prideaux's assertion of illiteracy – and his connection to an original, purified belief system that might inspire and improve all. Stubbe does not deny that Mahomet wrote the Alcoran, but finds no problem with accepting his authorship, lauding his vision and leadership. Both lay great emphasis on his destruction of idols and idolatry and devotion to monotheism – Prideaux dismissively acknowledges that Mahomet claimed to revive rather than to innovate, while Stubbe goes further, focusing on Mahomet's revolutionary revival of a pure anti-Trinitarian message, his devotional connections to Moses and Abraham and his veneration of the teachings of Jesus, whom Stubbe names Isa (the name for Christ in the Qur'ān) throughout. Picking up on this same point, Prideaux suggests that although Mahomet accepted the New and Old Testaments, he altered them to support his imposture when quoting them in the Alcoran. In this,

> certainly he acted much wiser than our *Socinians*, who with him denying the *Holy Trinity* and the *Divinity of our Saviour*, yet still allow the *Holy Scripture*, as now in our Hands, to be genuine and uncorrupted, with which their Doctrine is in the most manifest manner totally inconsistent.[143]

Here and elsewhere Prideaux asserts Mahomet's imposture to demonstrate Socinian imposture and demonise them in comparison. Quite how this could work effectively once Stubbe had resolved to celebrate Mahomet, wearing the connection as a badge of honour, is an indication of how radically Stubbe's *Originall* altered the terms of the debate – for the first time it made Mahomet unequivocally 'true' and legitimate.

Despite his contempt for the Socinians, whom he regularly elides with the Deists, like Addison, Prideaux is no unquestioning traditionalist in his approach to the standard early sources. In these works he and Stubbe comprehensively dismantle the polemical framework in which the life of Mahomet had been contained over previous centuries, although from quite

different directions. Although Prideaux does affirm the prophet's falling sickness in an attempt to further his theme of pretended revelation, he corrects those Christians who have so 'abhorred' Mahomet's 'Wickedness' that they became 'apt to say too much'. From this 'it hath proceeded, that we have so many fabulous and ridiculous Accounts, both of *Mahomet* and his *Imposture*, go current amongst us, which serve only to the exposing of us to the laughter of the *Mahometans*, when related among them'.[144] Later in the text he passes over as 'idle Fables, not to be credited' the long-established faked miracles involving the training of the dove/pigeon and the bull and is sceptical about the identity of the notorious monk Sergius, although he ultimately identifies a heretical Christian accomplice whom, when still Christian, was Sergius, before changing his name to Bahira when in Arabia.[145] Prideaux further identifies as myth Christian narratives about Mahomet's promised but failed resurrection and his floating tomb.[146] His purpose is to reform the life and get to the root of the imposture. Stubbe, as might be expected, devotes a section of his book to refuting 'such stories' with which 'the Christians [have] represented him to be the vilest imposter in the world, and transformed the wisest legislator that ever was into a cheat'.[147] He dismisses these 'fables' in their entirety as without credit.[148] This was, after all, a 'vindication' of Mahomet 'from the Calumnies of the Christians', as its later title indicates.

Both Stubbe and Prideaux are interested, instead of fables, in the ways in which Mahometanism developed, in those Mahomet surrounded himself with, in the *Hijra* and especially in the military campaigns that dominated the latter part of his life. These are related in considerable detail, and their prominence reflects an ongoing preoccupation with Mahomet's military prowess that relates to the Civil Wars and their aftermath. For Prideaux, these campaigns are a straightforward demonstration of the fact that Mahomet propagated his religion by the sword – another early commonplace maintained. For Stubbe they have a very different significance. He places them in the context of the construction and expansion of an empire of faith, based upon the example of Mahomet himself, who sought dominion for God alone and who showed that

> the prudent may be absolute without Tyranny and without regret or enfeebling the spirits of the most Valiant; that the arts of Government consist not in the show but use of Authority, and the true use of it is to insinuate itself into, not impose upon, men's Reason.[149]

This was, as Garcia has noted, a controversial vision of Mahomet as a 'virtuous republican' and allows Stubbe to use Mahometanism as 'an

ideal model for re-imagining England's republican past'.[150] James R. Jacob has further suggested the possibility that Stubbe's vision of religious authority invested in a civil leader, derived in part from Hobbes, was also intended to be a comment on Charles II. In 1672, around the time Stubbe is thought to have written his *Originall*, Charles asserted 'what he claimed to be the royal prerogative in ecclesiastical affairs' and issued his Declaration of Indulgence. Jacob argues that 'the Indulgence was an exercise in Erastian tolerationism of the kind that Stubbe advocated' in his text; using the figure of Mahomet to comment upon contemporary politics and monarchical policy as well as authority was entirely in keeping with previous decades.[151] Thus we have Charles II imagined, as his father and Cromwell had been before him, as a type of Mahomet.

Stubbe also repeatedly finds significance in details that Prideaux chose to ignore because they compromise his argument. The toleration extended to Jews and Christians under Mahometan law supports his argument (and later Locke's) in favour of a benevolent and visionary wielding of civic and ecclesiastical power – this happy coexistence under Mahomet supports Stubbe's contention that this is no new religion but rather a reaffirmation of 'the Religion of Noah'.[152] The *Originall* is also preoccupied with the example set by Mahomet and his followers – Stubbe is particularly impressed by Ali, for instance, reflecting a wider Orientalist interest epitomised in the later work of Simon Ockley.[153] This moral probity is an implicit attack on a corrupt, misguided and erroneous Christian priesthood, and is shown to be essential in the establishment of a fledgling Mahometanism. The five pillars of faith are at the heart of such civic-oriented humility, with Stubbe focussing on the importance of devotional ablutions, on the frequency and committed nature of prayer and on the denial of sensual pleasures, including alcohol, contrary once again to popular imaginings of a religion catering to self-indulgent pleasure-seekers. In the context of such exemplary conduct, Stubbe celebrates Mahomet's astute maintenance of pre-Mahometan ritual as a necessary and comforting continuation of practice. Thus circumcision, another Christian bugbear, is defended as the canny and deliberate retention of an ancient custom, as in a number of similar cases. In this:

> It is agreed by the most knowing in the Oriental transactions that Mahomet resolved to make no greater change in Arabia than was necessary to his purpose and did ingeniously accommodate to his ends those superstitious usages which were imprinted in the breasts of the Ishmaelites.[154]

Stubbe's suggestion of a conscious policy when referring to Mahomet's single-minded pursuit of his 'main designe' suggests an element of Machiavellian realpolitik (as filtered through Hobbes). The end is all in this enterprise – as Stubbe points out, 'he that knows not how to go up the ladder shall never get up to the top of the house'. Let others 'cry out this is good, this is fine' but let the prudent 'consider what is possible, what is requisite, and how to turn to advantage the successes of each day'.[155] Stubbe's Mahomet is a pragmatic visionary, a benevolent leader of multiple talents prepared to compromise in order to achieve the greater good – someone whom we might call an 'Enlightenment man'.

Turning to the final episode – Mahomet's death and its immediate aftermath – it should not now be surprising that both Stubbe and Prideaux ignore the Christian versions that had variously involved drunkenness, death by swine, unfulfilled resurrection and a rotting carcass. They reproduce the same version of events, asserting that an earlier attempt to poison him had weakened Mahomet and finally killed him three years later. Both narrate the initial confusion that followed his death, and its resolution. This, as with the general congruence of these two lives, is largely a consequence of the same authoritative source material – Pococke's *Specimen historiae Arabum* (1650), which both authors augment but which was fundamental to this newly standardised English life. Thus a feasible rather than an exemplary and fabricated death becomes part of the newly standardised life.

There remains for Prideaux, however, one point of considerable divergence from Stubbe. In *The True Nature of Imposture* Prideaux devotes a substantial section – some fourteen pages – to detailing Mahomet's night journey through heaven, the *mi'râj*. This had been a staple of early Christian mythologies, and for Prideaux this was a cynical solution to an absence of the miraculous, for 'the people calling on him for Miracles to prove his Mission, and he being able to work none', Mahomet 'invents this Story of his Journey to *Heaven*; which must be acknowledged to have Miracle enough in it, by all those who have Faith to believe it'.[156] The affirmation of Mahomet's authorship necessitates that Prideaux include it, 'how absurd soever it be, since my Design is to give as full an Account as I can of this Man's *Imposture*, it obligeth me to relate it'.[157] Yet this is a ploy. After relating Mahomet's travel through the heavens, which he compiles from a panoply of sources both medieval and near contemporary, Prideaux suggests that the relation of this '*Extravagant Fiction*' nearly destroyed Mahomet's whole imposture. It was received, he writes, 'as it deserved, with a *general hoot*'. Some 'laughed at the ridiculousness of the

Story, and others taking indignation at it, cryed out shame upon him for telling them such *an abominable Lye*'.[158] Many abandoned Mahomet, and it required all his 'Art' to assert its truth, which Prideaux suggests was intended to raise him up to the level of Moses and Christ by relating a direct encounter with God. He accepts that some Mahometans see the *mi'râj* as an allegorical vision, but dismisses this possibility to assert that it is 'as firmly believed by all that *Religion*, as any thing in the *Gospel* is by us *Christians*'. The twist comes at the end of his account where, having discussed the status of this 'fiction' and its centrality to the '*Sonnah*' (the *Sunna*), he turns once more to his contemporaries, for 'how fabulous and absurd soever this Story be, the *Socinians*, who have in so many things copied after this *Imposter*, have not stuck to borrow this also from him'. Instead, although they deny the manifest proof of Christ's divinity in 'many Texts of Scripture', they fabricate equivalent stories and justify them in terms of scriptural reference. Such tactics demonstrate 'how miserable a shift they are reduced to, for the support of that Impiety which they assert. For take but this from them, and it must all necessarily fall to the ground.'[159]

Unitarian writers had largely avoided the issue of Mahomet's miracles beyond the dismissive refutation of the stock examples of Christian mythology. Miracles, as Prideaux implies, were a thorny issue for the self-consciously rational Unitarians and were often used by those supporting Anglican orthodoxy to attack Unitarianism as a kind of atheism. In contrast, Stubbe devotes considerable energy to denying the existence of Mahometan miracles. He insists his readers imagine that 'nothing befell, nothing was done by Mahomet, but what served to imprint in the people an opinion that he was a prophet, which he the more fomented in them by framing his poems to the great God.'[160] For Stubbe, miracles and 'true' religion were necessarily distinct, making Mahomet's mortal humanity an affirmation of his prophethood rather than its disproof, as the established Christian mythology suggested.

Stubbe considers a number of examples, one of which is the suggestion of Mahomet's 'falling sickness' affirmed by Prideaux. It is dealt with cursorily: 'it is a disease not to be dissembled and in which no dissimulation can be used'. Furthermore,

> I grant he might either naturally or by some other unknown means frequently fall into ecstasies, and lie entranced, but this differs much from the falling sickness, so it was no incredible incident among the Arabians, who might have learned from the Jews and Christians concerning the ecstasies of the old Prophet and of Paul.'[161]

This is typical of Stubbe: a determination to scrutinise Christianity with the same rationale that Christians use to scrutinise Mahometanism – a key Enlightenment development. In doing so he invariably demonstrates contemporary Christianity to be equally, if not more, irrational than the misplaced accusations historically levelled at Mahomet and his 'lawe'. Herein lay the usefulness of Mahomet to the Unitarians: they could use him to demonstrate the existence and character of a true, tolerant and essential pre-Nicene gospel and faith and could attack Trinitarian orthodoxy in comparison to this ideal and in the terms its proponents used to attack Mahomet. If the Unitarians identified with a Mahomet newly stripped of Christian opprobrium, they identified their opponents with the dominant Christian myths surrounding Mahomet: with naive credulity, fake miracles, unsound scripture and imposture. As Bunyan had feared, Christianity had somehow become Mahometanism, and Christ, Mahomet.

Stubbe's request that his readers lay aside their prejudices and consider Mahomet anew was, in the context of the late seventeenth century, a startling one. Stubbe presented the development of Mahometanism as 'one of the greatest transactions the world has ever yet been acquainted with' – the creation 'of an empire greater than any of the four so famed monarchies' by 'a man of mean estate, fiercely opposed, and slenderly befriended'.[162] For Stubbe, Mahomet had 'gained so much upon the esteem of one part of the world and filled the rest with astonishment' and had done so with an charismatic appeal to fundamental monotheistic religious principles – as valid in late sixteenth-century England as in the Arabia where this 'Mahometan revolution' had taken place.[163] This was neither orthodox Anglican nor idolatrous Roman Catholic doctrine, but implied a return to religious simplicity and natural reason, the abandonment of unnecessary complications and priestly superstition – a Reformation fully complete. This was Stubbe's 'Mahometan Christianity'.

In these terms his *Originall* is not just a history of Mahomet but a history of religion culminating in Mahomet, and organised around four 'great revolutions' – the acceptance of Christ by a number of Jews as the messiah; the Jewish rebellion against the Romans in Jerusalem and Alexandria, resulting in a greater divide between Jewish and Christian traditions and practises; Constantine's revolution, reducing Christianity to the Nicene Creed; and Mahomet's revolution, re-establishing an original purity.[164] Although there is no evidence that Prideaux ever read Stubbe's text, the extent to which the *Originall* defined the parameters of the subsequent controversy and of Prideaux's life of Mahomet can be

seen in their similarities as well as in Prideaux's conspicuously Stubbe-like acknowledgement that Mahomet 'arose by the Impulse of his Ambition, and the Sagaciousness of his Wit to that heighth, as to make one of the greatest *Revolutions* that ever happened in the World'.[165] Despite his disagreement with Stubbe, Prideaux could not help but shift the terms of attack.

Although Stubbe's work was groundbreaking, it was Humphrey Prideaux who was to prove the more influential. Multiple editions in his lifetime, and later editions carried by British imperial expansion around the globe, meant that Prideaux more than any other writer of the period came to represent an approved, standard Anglican life of Mahomet for subsequent decades, although George Sale would attack Prideaux, along with the 1649 *Alcoran*, for their glaring inaccuracies in his 1734 *Koran*.[166] Stubbe's influence is more difficult to establish, particularly given that his *Originall* remained unpublished until 1911, and circulated only in manuscript. This gives some indication of its incendiary potential, and some justification for Stubbe's contemporary reputation as 'a dangerous fellow'.[167] Indeed Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani (or Charles Hornby before him) omitted or moved sections of Stubbe's manuscript version in the 1911 printed text, one of which is the extraordinary opening introduction of the figure of Mahomet, 'this great soul' in whose body 'the Awfullness of Maiesty seem'd to bee temper'd with admiral sweetness which at once imprinted in the beholders Respect Reverence & Love'. He had 'a Grace so peculiar that it was impossible to see him with indifference', and the 'Arabians compare him to the purest streams of some River gently gliding along which arrests and delights the Eyes of every approaching passenger'.[168]

The scholarly work of James Jacob, Justin Champion and, more recently, Humberto Garcia has detected Stubbe's influence in a number of later works, suggesting how the *Originall* appears to have been widely read in the early years of the eighteenth century, engaging those on both sides of the Unitarian/Trinitarian debate. Garcia has persuasively argued, for instance, that Tory responses to the Islamic revolution in Hungary offer an important context for reading the 'secrets' of Stubbe's 'clandestine account'.[169] Of those writers in whom Stubbe's influence has been identified, most controversial, brilliant and influential was John Toland, who had been attacked as a 'Mahometan Christian', whose books were banned and burnt and whose text, *Nazarenus or, Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity* (1718), is clearly indebted to Stubbe's redrafting of religious

history. Working in a post-1688 environment that allowed considerably greater publication freedom, the 'radical Whiggery' of Toland and other nonconformists pursued liberty of conscience and a deeply anticlerical agenda. Like Stubbe, Toland wrote of the existence of a single true religion that had been reignited by Mahomet, and mapped that earlier reformation onto the Anglican church, creating Stubbe's vital 'Mahometan Christianity'. In *Nazarenus* he turned to the foundational Nazarenes, the earliest Jewish Christians, to explore the first incarnation of the church and expound the 'Noahic precepts'.[170] As Jacob has recognised, following Stubbe – and, as Stubbe had done, employing John Selden's work on Jewish history – Toland 'succeeded in paganizing Christianity'.[171]

Toland also followed Stubbe in asserting that it was 'but lately that we begun to be undeceiv'd about MAHOMET's pigeon, his pretending to work miracles, and his tomb's being suspended in the air: pious frauds and fables, to which the Musulmans are utter strangers'.[172] Toland then went on to reposition Mahomet and Christianity by turning to sources largely eschewed by orthodoxy, including the Alcoran and the rediscovered *Gospel of Barnabas*, although he also used Prideaux – 'that moderate Divine and finish'd Scholar'.[173] As Sale would do later in the century, Toland found that the extraordinary *Gospel of Barnabas* controversially named Mahomet 'as the designed accomplisher of God's economy towards man': this confirmed Toland's thesis concerning 'the ancient Ebionite or Nazarene system' and of the priestly erasure of Mahomet from Christian scriptures discussed by Stubbe.[174] As he points out, it also, usefully, 'agrees in everything almost with the scheme of our modern Unitarians'.[175]

Placing Stubbe's theories within 'a *corpus* of oriental study', Toland also sought to go further, renegotiating and attempting to resolve Christian scriptural controversies and focussing less on Mahomet than on Moses, reclaiming him and his state in historical and political rather than theological terms.[176] For Stubbe and Toland, as Champion has pointed out, 'Mahomet and Moses were legislators founding their principles upon true monotheistic roots'.[177] These were the possibilities opened up by Stubbe's approach to Mahomet and Mahometanism in the late seventeenth century, and they would go on to inform a wholesale rethinking of statecraft, religious history and the assumptions of orthodoxy in the following century. Even on Mahomet alone, new questions were being asked: 1720 saw the publication of *Mahomet No Imposter*, written under the 'authentic' pseudonym of Abdulla Mahumed Omar. This book asserted Stubbe and Toland's Unitarianism, as manifested in Mahomet, and attacked

Prideaux's work as 'false and scandalous', designed 'to render him and his Religion odious'.[178] Omar reacts specifically against earlier 'lying Narratives' and the implication of imposture, which he defines as 'delivering a new Religion prejudicial to Mankind, as the Revelation of God, which was yet his own Invention, to promote and gratify his Ambition and Lust'.[179] In response he writes: 'Mahomet was the first, who, either by the extraordinary Strength of his Reason, or a particular Inspiration from Heaven, arriv'd at the Knowledge of one eternal God the Creator of all Things'.[180] He concludes in a tone that is both conciliatory and provocative, asserting that 'I am really of Opinion, that not only Mahomet, but Jesus Christ and Moses also were sent from God for the Benefit of Mankind'.[181] Advocating a sea change in the hidebound Anglican structure and hierarchy, this text also owed its genesis, history and politics to Stubbe's encounter with Mahomet in 1671. Perhaps the influence of the *Account* was more profound than it initially appears.[182]

When considering a period defined at its start by William Bedwell's orthodox and opprobrious Arabism and Samuel Purchas's tentative publication of sections of the Alcoran, reorganised to a refutational Christian schema, and at its end by Toland's *Nazarenus* and Omar's *Mahomet No Imposter*, it is clear that a momentous change had taken place. Although it is always dangerous to impose a teleological coherence upon a century that in its chaos and conflict resists easy historical narratives, there is in Bedwell and Purchas a series of emerging features – a concern with divinity and with relativism; a desire to encounter authentic Mahometan voices; the imperative to make this material available to a wider audience – that are present in new forms in the work of Stubbe and Toland. The simultaneous development of English Arabism throughout the century and the use of Mahomet as a polemical tool for intervention in political discourse fuse together less spectacularly in *The Alcoran of Mahomet* in 1649 (and 1688) than they do in the anti-Trinitarian writings of the century's end. Stubbe's work was formed in the conjunction of these two traditions and a determination to challenge the dominant mythology surrounding Mahomet. Another English Mahomet had emerged, quite distinct from those that had gone before.

It may be that in the desperate crisis of faith he faced in the 1650s, John Bunyan had some inkling of what was to come. Had he, while languishing in the long dark night of his spiritual trials, assailed with doubts and questions about faith and the status of Jesus, St Paul and Mahomet, somehow encountered Henry Stubbe (who was only four years his junior),

his conclusions might have been very different. Stubbe, in his deep antipathy for Pauline innovation, would no doubt have encouraged Bunyan in his suspicion that Paul was no saint, but a 'subtile and cunning man'. He might further have comforted Bunyan with the thought that it was not the whispering of the Devil that was telling him to raise Mahomet above Jesus, but the insistent voice of true and natural reason.

Conclusion: Mahomet Discovered

As the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane repeatedly disgorged its contents into the city streets during the season of 1743–4, London was filled with chatter concerning the daring new play being staged. In France, Voltaire's *Mahomet* had caused a sensation, eventually being removed by order of the Parisian procureur-general. In London the play was a smash hit. Performed by His Majesties Servants, featuring Mr Garrick and Mrs Gifford with the stentorian Mr Delane in the lead, it was quite a spectacle. Newly Englished, the play opened with a pointedly nationalistic prologue, declaring that although the play's 'Gallic Bard' had led his Tragic Muse into a 'Crusade' against '*What Blasphemies* Imposture *dares advance*', France '*was deaf*'. On English ground, however, '*she makes a firmer Stand*'. After all,

> *No Clergy here usurp the free-born Mind*,
> *Ordain'd to teach*, *and not enslave Mankind*;
> Religion *here bids* Persecution *cease*,
> Without, *all Order*, *and* within, *all Peace*;
> Truth *guards her happy Pale with watchful Care*,
> *And* Frauds, *tho*' Pious, *find no Entrance there*.[1]

To theatre audiences in post-Reformation England, who believed that the fraudulent and tyrannous excesses of the Roman Catholic Church had long been banished in favour of benevolent Anglicanism, the play provided edifying entertainment rather than an incendiary 'Crusade'. The freeborn English stood firmly against religious imposture, whether Mahometan or Papist, and were well positioned to comprehend *Mahomet*'s satire because their house was in order – an assertion apparently confirmed by Voltaire's exile in England between 1726 and 1729. Mahomet may stalk the stage as a malevolent Machiavel, cloaking a lust for power in piety, but the English need not fear his example. Unlike the *Alcoran of Mahomet*, in which Mahomet's sudden facility in English

prompted fears that he had come from France to make 'some Conquest of the Nation', here Mahomet presented no threat to England or the English.[2]

Simply in terms of popularity, Voltaire's portrayal exceeds all earlier stage depictions of Mahomet, the idol of Greene's *Alphonsus of Arragon* the only comparison. In the preface to the first printed edition (of more than fourteen) of James Miller and James Hoadly's English translation of *Mahomet*, Miller's widow had written of the 'favourable' opinion 'of the Town' to the play.[3] But this was only the beginning: the English translation of *Mahomet* was performed on London stages in every decade that remained of the eighteenth century, often through two or three seasons, with more than twelve different productions.[4] Its various lead actors adorned titlepages and commemorative ceramic tiles costumed in their Mahometan finery (Figures 23, 24 and 25). Greene's stage idol had emerged from the professional stage's embrace of antiquated romance fantasies of Mahomet, filtered through a virulent anti-Catholicism, to breathe flames over an awestruck crowd. Voltaire's Mahomet is similarly a product of a particular time and place – one of 'a sequence of fanatics' that he placed on the stage through which his French audiences saw 'very clearly' that he was attacking the church.[5] The play's translation and subsequent popularity in England demonstrates a new dynamic. Mahomet was no longer dangerous or contentious, but rather the lead role in a pantomime of anti-Mahometan and anti-Catholic equivalence, a satirical swipe against tyranny and religious fanaticism *elsewhere*.

Whereas Greene had ignored contemporary narratives of Mahomet's life, Voltaire embraced them, employing Spinozist Henrie de Boulainvilliers' controversial *La Vie de Mahomed* as a source – it appeared in English as *The life of Mahomet* in 1731. Boulainvilliers' volume was, according to its anonymous translator, the story of 'a Great Man, a Great Genius, and a Great Prince'.[6] It celebrated Mahomet as a legislator, but in marked contrast to the Spinozist relativism of his later writing, Voltaire took only what he needed to make his Mahomet 'the epitome of evil and fanaticism'.[7] Constructing the play around the lives of those who witnessed Mahomet's destruction of the idols of the Ka'bah following his conquest of Mecca in 630 – an episode often used by early Christian authors to celebrate his monotheism – Voltaire pivots these lives around Mahomet's manipulative hypocrisy. 'Despotick faith' and 'superstition', in which 'success consecrates our Actions', repeatedly overwhelm humanity and reason. Mahomet's first entrance, early in the second act, offers a sense of his special brand of villainy:



Figure 23. 'Mr Bensley in the Character of Mahomet' – probably by Guy Green (printer). Tin-glazed earthenware tile with transfer-printed decoration (c. 1777–80) – one of 26 tiles depicting famous actors and actresses of the period. © V & A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, CIRC. 91–1922.

> *SCENE changes to a spacious Grotto.*
> MAHOMET *with the* Alcoran *before him*.
> Mah. Glorious hypocrisy! What Fools are they,
> Who, fraught with lustful or ambitious Views
> Wear not thy specious mask --- Thou, *Alcoran*!
> Hast won more Battles, ta'en more Cities for me,
> Than thrice my feeble Numbers had atchiev'd
> Without the Succour of thy sacred Impulse.[8]

This celebrated moment, in which an audience 'discovers' Mahomet incriminating himself and his religion, is lavishly illustrated in a suitably oriental setting to accompany the titlepage of the 1777 edition of the play-text (Figure 24). It recalls Tamburlaine's burning of the Alcoran in its playful evocation of Christian parallels, and affirms assumptions that return to Higden, Voragine and earlier: Mahomet lived beyond convention and



Figure 24. 'Mr Bensley in the Character of Mahomet' – James Miller, *Mahomet the imposter. A tragedy. Marked with the variations of the managers book, at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane* (London: C. Bathurst etc al, 1777) – facing frontispiece. © The British Library Board, 1342.n.3.(6.).

morality, manufacturing religion to serve his own Machiavellian lust for power. So, despite his use of Boulainvilliers' controversial book, Voltaire's portrayal was at odds with recent attempts at reclamation and renaming. It was an impressively popular portrayal of extravagant fanaticism and folly that, in England, marked the emergence of a newly tame Mahomet.

Voltaire's *Mahomet* represents the reassertion of a certain orthodoxy. The arrival, also from France, of Antoine Galland's 'reconstruction'



Figure 25. 'Mr Palmer as Mahomet' – James Miller, *Mahomet the imposter. A tragedy. Taken from the manager's book, at the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane* (London: R. Butters, 1790?) – frontispiece. By kind permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Vet. A5e.3386.

and translation of *Les mille et une nuits* in England from 1706 had triggered a remarkably swift reorientation of English tastes for what was an increasingly ill-defined 'Orient'. More than eighty collections imitating the Anglicised *Arabian Nights* would appear before 1800.[9] This oriental vogue, eventually encompassing everything from architecture, fine arts

and furnishings to costumes and literature, was a consequence of a new Afro-Eurasian political dynamic codified by the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz, which penned the defeated Ottoman Empire back to the boundaries of Hungary following a four-year Austro-Ottoman war. Ottoman dominion over Christendom, feared from the first siege of Vienna in 1529 to the second one in 1683, was no longer so immediate, and threat gradually gave way to fetishisation. This immersion in all things oriental was also a response to new circumstances and ideas that were shaping the new world of Enlightenment Europe. Voltaire's *Mahomet* demonstrates scepticism towards religious authority and the justification of violence in the name of religion, but the costumes and poses adopted by the actors playing Mahomet showcased a new emphasis on luxury, sexual excess and violence in a portrayal of oriental despotism straight from the pages of Galland's *Arabian Nights*.

It might seem counterintuitive to suggest that just as the imperial powers of Northern Europe began to lapse into what has been termed 'high' Orientalism, a period often dated from Napoleon's Egyptian campaign of 1798–1801, they began to lose interest in Mahomet and Mahometanism. Yet late-eighteenth-century images of Mahomet on the stage complete the long process of 'sultanizing' the prophet that had begun in the sixteenth century and, following a final flourish of intellectual engagement in the early Enlightenment – where Mahometanism once again functioned as a Christian surrogate at a time of religious reorientation – Mahomet seems to become popularly codified, safely contained within encyclopaedias and textbooks, consigned to the periphery of things. Voltaire only affirms this in placing Mahomet on the stage.

Unlike Greene's *Alphonsus*, where any impersonation is circumvented through the use of a flame-breathing idol, Mr Delane, Mr Bensley and Mr Palmer seem to have been only too willing to perform Mahomet. Ros Ballaster has recently suggested that such a role 'indicates the permeability of a national culture, the possibility that appropriative traffic is never one way'. The Orient 'inhabits' the actor 'at the same time as he impersonates the Orient'.[10] The increasing permeability of British literary culture would thus seem to go hand in hand with imperial achievement, generating richly symbolic exchanges. This may well be the case for Aurangzeb or Mustapha, the other examples that Ballaster cites, but performance serves to shrink and dehistoricise Mahomet. His was not a typical stage role, with *Mahomet* the first professional dramatisation since *Alphonsus*.[11] Any actor playing Mahomet was simultaneously oriental despot, raging tyrant, papal imposter and Mahometan archetype. Furthermore, Mahomet's role

had long been engaged by the English, and many had recognised the satirical potential in an English Mahomet. Mahomet's repeated appearance on eighteenth-century stages reflects a continuing prominence, and thus box office returns, but a willingness to stage him at all indicates the scale of his domestication.

Soon after completing *Mahomet* in or around 1736, Voltaire's notion of Mahomet and Mahometanism underwent a transformation. He had found new inspiration, and in August 1738 wrote excitedly to Nicolas Thierot: 'There is a devil of an Englishman who has made a very beautiful translation of the holy Alcoran, preceded by a preface far more beautiful than all the alcorans of the world.'[12] This Englishman was George Sale, whose *Koran*, published in London in 1734, was doubtless familiar to many in the Drury Lane audiences of 1743–4. As Ziad Elmarsafy has demonstrated, Sale's translation 'is distinguished as a locus that combines multiple perspectives, from early Orientalism to radical philosophy'.[13] In its incorporation of an extraordinary amount of preliminary material, Sale's *Koran* can be placed in the long tradition of Christian translations of the text – and it is a lineage that Sale recognises and rejects – but in its preoccupation with detail, accuracy and Arabic-source authenticity, it was something quite new. The *Koran*'s merits as a translation have been considered in detail elsewhere, but there can be no doubting its influence: Elmarsafy has identified more than sixty editions in English and versions of the text published in Dutch, French, Swedish, and Arabic in 1891.[14]

The portion of Sale's opening discourse devoted to the life of 'Mohammed' is transparently a product of the disputes of the previous century, if not centuries. His notes alone reveal a reading of Boulainvilliers, Toland, Adrian Reland's *De religione Mohamedica* (an attempt to debunk Christian mythology by referring only to Muslim sources, used by Toland, and translated into English in 1712), Humphrey Prideaux and Spinoza. This curious mix indicates the spectrum of approaches on this issue available to an educated reader in eighteenth-century England, and its ongoing relevance in political and religious circles.[15] Sale steers a careful path through these waters. He repeatedly corrects Prideaux on matters of fact, but is cautious about expressing his own views on contentious topics.[16] When considering 'Mohammed's' assertion that he was 'replanting' the true and ancient religion of '*Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Jesus*, and all the prophets', with which Toland had concurred, he asserts:

> Whether this was the effect of enthusiasm, or only a design to raise himself to the supreme government of his country, I will not pretend to determine. The latter is

the general opinion of *Christian* writers, who agree that ambition, and the desire of satisfying his sensuality were the motives of his undertaking … His original design of bringing the pagan *Arabs* to the knowledge of the true GOD, was certainly noble, and highly to be commended; for I cannot possibly subscribe to the assertion of a late learned writer, that he made that nation exchange their idolatry for another religion altogether as bad. *Mohammed* was no doubt fully satisfied in his conscience of the truth of his grand point, the unity of GOD, which was what he chiefly attended to; all his other doctrines and institutions being rather accidental, and unavoidable, than premeditated and designed.[17]

The 'late learned writer' is clearly Prideaux. Sale's self-consciously objective stance here serves to remove him from involvement in the sectarian politics that had skewed Prideaux's work. In marked contrast to earlier translations, Sale's attempt at objectivity also asserts a methodology in which the reconstruction of Mahomet's motives is neither possible nor relevant. Certainly the 'wise conduct and great prudence' Mahomet demonstrated in pressing his 'great reformation' seems 'inconsistent with the wild notions of a hot-brained religionist'.[18]

In a passage reminiscent of both Toland and Stubbe – particularly the latter's opening section – Sale presses his case: that 'what ever were his motives, *Mohammed* had certainly the personal qualifications which were necessary to accomplish his undertaking'. Like Purchas and subsequent writers, Sale notes that '*Mohammedan* authors are excessive in their commendations of him, and speak much of his religious and moral virtues; as his piety, veracity, justice, liberality, clemency, humility, and abstinence'.[19] He simply cannot have been the 'monster of wickedness' so often recycled by Christian polemicists. Even his fabled lust, a topic on which 'he is constantly upbraided' by 'the controversial writers', needed to be reconsidered in historical and cultural context. Such writers 'fail not to urge the number of women with whom he had to do, as a demonstrative argument of his sensuality, which they think sufficiently prove him to have been a wicked man, and consequently an imposter'. Yet, adds Sale, polygamy was 'frequently practised in *Arabia* and other parts of the east, and was not counted an immorality, nor was a man the worse esteemed on that account'.[20]

Sale's choice of phrasing, rigorous historical research and line of argument set out his method. He is no 'controversial', writing the history of Mahomet to score polemical points in the present. He cultivates a dispassionate and scholarly distance from his subject – although not enough for some, including his colleagues in the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge – seeking only to place Mahomet and his religion back into

the circumstances of their initial genesis. It might be argued that Sale's is a perspective symptomatic of a growing imperial confidence, an orientalist vision, but that need not undermine its importance. Sale thus endorses and completes a reformation of Christian attitudes to Mahomet that had begun with Henry Stubbe in the 1670s.

One element of Sale's reformation that distinguishes him from Stubbe and Toland, however, is his *reduction* of Mahomet's significance and the amplification of the importance of the Qur'ān and of post-Mahomet history. Whereas Ketton's 1143 translation had been titled *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete*, a title which indicated a focus on refutation based on erroneous assertions of Mahomet's authorship, and the 1649 *Alcoran of Mahomet* had done the same, Sale's translation was termed *The Koran, commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed, translated into English immediately from the original Arabic*. This title signals a departure. Voragine and Higden had indicated a scepticism for 'comon' tales of Mahomet, and Sale's conspicuous dismissal of what is '*commonly*' called the '*Alcoran of Mohammed*' in favour of '*The Koran*' downplays authorship and begins to dislodge Mahomet from the central point he had occupied in Christian conceptions of Mahometanism for centuries. This renaming also marks a clear break from the 1649 translation (republished in 1688), which had been translated not '*immediately from the original Arabic*' but second-hand, from the French. In distancing himself and his work from earlier writings that had fixated on Mahomet, Sale refocused Enlightenment attitudes to Mahometanism, bringing such attitudes gradually into line with orthodox Islamic belief. Mahomet's newly peripheral position was to prove lastingly influential, even as he appeared on the London stage.

The translation and subsequent success of Votaire's *Mahomet* in England and George Sale's landmark *Koran* appear to represent two opposing ways of imagining Mahomet in the mid-eighteenth century. The fact that Voltaire had been won over to Sale's position by the time *Mahomet* was first performed in London should not obscure the continuing and widespread espousal of a narrative of imposture that *Mahomet* endorsed. Lecturing in May 1840, Thomas Carlyle reacted against what he described as 'Our current hypothesis about Mahomet', that 'he was a scheming Imposter, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity'. That Sale's alternative perspective similarly remained current by the mid-nineteenth century is evident both in Carlyle's response – that this hypothesis 'is really now untenable to any one' – and in his extensive use of Sale's translation.[21] Their differences present a useful endpoint to this

book, suggesting a neat division between those looking back to earlier Mahomets and those looking forward to new concepts of 'Mohammed', a bifurcation that brings to an end the experimentation, instability and immediacy of Mahomet in the previous two centuries.

Voltaire and Sale may represent the emergence of a stark dividing line between conceptions of Mahomet in the popular sphere and scholarly engagements with 'Mohammed', along lines similar to those identified by Norman Daniel in medieval writing on this subject.[22] As alluring as they may be, however, such rigid divisions crumble under scrutiny. In the writing of polemical drama, Voltaire was hardly a mouthpiece for the popular voice, even if the output of the Georgian playhouse could be unproblematically defined as 'popular'. Similarly, with repeated editions, anthologising and wide dissemination in other forms, Sale's work was not confined to an orientalist scholarly elite. Nor can Sale's 'Preliminary Discourse' be considered an unequivocally positive depiction of 'Mohammed' or the 'Koran'. Despite the reservations of some of his contemporaries, who perceived counter-discourses in his work, Sale seems unlikely to have been (to adapt a phrase) 'of Mohammed's party without knowing it'. His primary purpose was evangelical, and he was not averse to undermining Roman Catholicism through his skills as an Arabist. His opening address to the reader explicitly boasts: '*Protestants* alone are able to attack the *Korân* with success; and for them, I trust, Providence has reserved the glory of its overthrow.'[23] So despite differing investments, both Voltaire and Sale's work emerge from similar contexts, both engage in Christian confessional conflict, both refute Mahometanism – what Sale calls 'so manifest a forgery' – and both present a newly peripheral Mahomet.

Inevitably, many of the preoccupations that had defined the early modern period remain at large. An imperative, following Luther, to disseminate and refute Mahomet, particularly through the multiplying forms of print culture, continue to inform Enlightenment attitudes. The need to establish an authoritative life, use it as a benchmark for the definition of orthodoxy and thereafter as the basis for the writing and rewriting of religious history also remains a central element. Perhaps less important in *Mahomet*, but centrally important for Sale, is a need to explain why Mahometans believe in Mahomet, and in explaining to challenge and undermine, with evangelical intent. The use of Mahometan sources and history, even if faked, grows in importance during the Enlightenment, prompting a questioning of assumptions about Christian belief and ritual and, less provocatively, enabling writers to pick holes in the fabric of Roman Catholicism.

Spinozist relativism, in an early incarnation in the works of Stubbe and Toland, would seem to deny continuity as it begins to unsettle and overturn a dominant medieval narrative of Mahomet. Yet while the substance of the life alters, these concerns do not. Into the Enlightenment Mahomet continues to be invoked as a means to chart and intervene in religious change, but later, as the beliefs of the 'oriental' become subsumed into ill-defined European fantasies of *Arabian Nights* sorcery and polytheistic mythology, Mahomet retreats from public view into scholarly corners. This development is not consistent – Mahomet the great imposter appears in Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1788), but barely features in the great poetic works of Romantic Orientalism, or in the vogue for oriental tales that preceded and accompanied them.[24] Mahomet is at best a shadowy presence in such works, offhandedly called upon to affirm Mahometan belief, but most often he is absent from visions of indolence, tyranny, depravity and luxury such as Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) and *Don Juan* (1821) and Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* (1818). He is engaged more directly, but is still peripheral to the plot, in James Ridley's *The Tales of the Genii* (1766) and Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817).[25] The sensuous, luxurious landscape of these tales suggests that long-established narratives of 'Mahomet's Paradise' were being teased out to stand for the orient as a whole, but with Mahomet no longer the presiding deity.

So when Thomas Carlyle used Mahomet as the subject of the second of his four lectures, published as *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), it was something of a British revival. Goethe was a great influence – especially his conception of Mahomet as theological poet – because his work made 'the universal message of Islam "receivable," comprehensible' to Carlyle.[26] Building on Goethe's ideas, and through him, earlier Enlightenment orientalist scholarship, Carlyle envisaged a 'Universal History, the history of what man had accomplished in this world' that was, at its heart, 'the History of the Great Men who have worked here'.[27] These were above all 'sincere' and 'original' men, who saw through the surface of things to the truth beyond. With Mahomet, Carlyle began by dismissing the irrationality of the Christian polemical tradition, asserting that it 'really is time to dismiss all that'.[28] Curiously, there follows the same assertion that had troubled Tyndale, Knox and Calvin, and which had prompted Bunyan's spiritual crisis of two centuries earlier:

A great number of God's creatures believe in Mahomet's word at this hour than in any other word whatever. Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I will believe most things sooner than that.[29]

In Carlyle's confident conclusion, two related assumptions are paramount. The first is the existence of a universal God and a logical universe working according to his divine plan. 'Islam's' inclusion in this plan is a return to some of the very earliest Christian responses, which had celebrated its status as a sub-Christian monotheism and a rejection of idolatry. Sure enough, later Carlyle asserts that 'Islam is definable as a confused kind of Christianity' and a 'bastard kind of Christianity, but a living kind; with a heart-life in it'.[30] In an echo of Stubbe and Toland, Christianity has lost something that Islam retains, but here it is something raw and untamed. The second assumption is that Mahomet was a speaker of religious truth, a legitimate instrument of God. This is the prophet Carlyle wants Mahomet to be – a Romantic visionary. He is 'sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us', his words 'a fiery mass of life cast-up from the great bosom of Nature herself'.[31] He is an extension of the deserts that surrounded him in childhood: 'alone there, deep down in the bosom of the Wilderness; has to grow up so, – alone with Nature and his own Thoughts'.[32]

Carlyle's religious sublime is epitomised in this 'deep-hearted Son of the Wilderness', a 'spontaneous, passionate, yet just, true-meaning man! Full of wild faculty, fire and light; of wild worth, all uncultured.'[33] In earlier writings Mahomet and his 'sect' had represented a profound irrationality. Mahomet's rehabilitation in the late early modern/early Enlightenment period as a man of integrity and sincerity, whose religion had a kind of truth, was a mark of the new relativism of the age. In 1840, in the midst of industrialisation, scientific empiricism and social change, Carlyle took Sale's sincere and devout prophet and celebrated him as an emblem of natural faith lost in an era of barren rationality. Nature is no longer divine but devalued as 'saleable, curious, good for propelling steamships!' Carlyle goes on: 'With our Sciences and Cyclopaedias, we are apt to forget the *divineness*, in those laboratories of ours. We ought not to forget it!'[34]

Mahomet and Islam become a means of reclaiming a lost Christian vitality, and are marooned in an uncultured distant past. Certainly Carlyle has no interest in the relevance of contemporary Islamic culture or the lives of contemporary Muslims, despite his awe at their number. Instead his lecture contributes to an ongoing orientalist calcification of

the conceptual border between Islam and 'the West'. 'Nothing but a sense of duty would carry any *European* through the Koran', he exclaims [my emphasis]. 'It is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement … insupportable stupidity, in short!'[35] Carlyle is not actually interested in Islam at all, but in Mahomet as a westernised man of action, a 'real' visionary – a 'Hero-Prophet'. He is only grudgingly engaged in celebrating Mahomet. When justifying his choice of subject, he explains, 'He is by no means the truest of Prophets, but I do esteem him a true one.'[36]

Thomas Carlyle chose Mahomet as one of his 'true prophets' in part because 'there is no danger of us becoming, any of us, Mahometans'.[37] His bluff confidence in the distance between Mahometanism and the British subject was unsustainable. Within half a century of Carlyle's London lectures, Lord Lathom, the Lord Chamberlain, cautioned against offending the religious sensibilities of fifty million Muslims in India and tens of millions elsewhere in the world, all now subjects of the British crown.[38] By 1890, Britain also had its first mosques: the Shah Jehan mosque in Woking, designed in the Indo-Sarracenic style by W. L. Chambers, and the Liverpool Muslim Institute, occupying a terraced house on West Derby Street near the centre of the city. These momentous events had a profound effect on British culture, but progress did not happen rapidly enough for some. As Abdullah (formerly William Henry) Quilliam, the founder of the Liverpool mosque and Victorian England's most famous Muslim convert, noted in *The Faith of Islam* (1889):

> When we consider that Islamism is so much mixed up with the British Empire, and the many millions of Moslem fellow subjects who live under the same rule, it is very extraordinary that so little should be generally known about this religion, its history, and that of its followers; and consequently the gross ignorance of the masses on the subject allows them to be easily deceived, and their judgement led astray by any pretender striving to raise up an excitement against those of that persuasion.[39]

Quilliam was a utopian evangelist and, revealingly, a former Unitarian – sections of his text are strongly Unitarian in emphasis – who had converted on his travels in North Africa. This well-placed reminder at the start of his six-penny pamphlet that Muslims within the Empire were 'fellow subjects' to whom the imperial centre owed respect and a duty of care justified his efforts and helped to galvanise new British ideas about Mahomet. As Quilliam suggests, the existence of Muslim subjects changes the terms of the relationship between Britain and Islam.

In an Indian context, the establishment of the Raj followed the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857, an event marked by savagery on both sides and which, although generated by secular and religious factors (both Muslim and Hindu), was firmly blamed on Islam in the British press.[40] The editorial of *The Morning Post* for 3 October 1857 remarked that it 'seems pretty clear now, that the Indian mutiny though originating with Hindoos, was concocted by Mahomedans'.[41] Robert A. Sterndale wrote a popular novel, *The Afghan Knife* (1879), identifying Islam as 'the prime mover of the rebellion'.[42] Mahomet had long been associated with religious violence – now characterised as fanaticism opposed to the pacific ideals of empire – and these episodes validated such associations. But the events of 1857 and the subsequent transferral of power in India from the East India Company to the British crown had consequences for contesting the figure of Mahomet that were entirely unexpected.

The same year that marked the beginning of the British Raj also saw the publication of Sir William Muir's landmark four-volume *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam, to the Era of the Hegira* (1858), intended as the last word on the long-contested subject of Mahomet. Muir was an accomplished scholar and translator, and his work is certainly scholarly – the opening chapters detail at length the biographical sources available in Muslim traditions (the text is based entirely on Arabic sources) before the life even begins. Muir departs from the norm, however, in his narration of divine revelation; for him, the dismissal of authentic revelation is a key element of his historical method, enabling him to offer an objective and more truthful account of Mahomet than any Muslim scholar could. His contention is that 'the fixed dogma with which every Mahometan sets out, that the Coran contains no Sura, no sentence, nor even a single word, which did not emanate by direct communication from God, has confined and misled the conclusions of the biographers'. Instead Muir uses the Qur'ān as a source for clues through which he can trace 'approximately the course of Mahomet's mental and physical history'.[43]

Having discarded divine intervention, Muir's biographical approach moves in the opposite direction. His Mahomet is in a state of crisis when he retreats to Mount Hira, traditionally the site of his first revelation. 'It is probable', writes Muir, that the elements constituting this crisis 'formed the evil and delusive element which, first mingling itself with the pure longing for Truth, led to the fatal and fearful error of speaking falsely and without commission in the name of God'.[44] Mahomet thus began sincere but lapsed into 'high blasphemy', and 'it is incumbent upon us', Muir argues, 'to consider this question from a Christian point of view, and to

ask whether the supernatural influence, which appears to have acted upon the soul of the Arabian prophet, *may* not have proceeded from the Evil One and his emissaries'.[45] Muir's own theological beliefs intrude here, and earlier Mahomets begin to reveal themselves. Muir's Mahomet is a cynical manipulator, a fallen man consumed by lust and power, situated within a Christian universe as a shadow of Christ. For unlike Christ, Mahomet 'was not possessed of any inherent supernatural ability'. Instead he 'arrogated a spiritual power which he was continually tempted to misuse in subservience to his personal necessities and even to his erring desires'. Muir concludes this episode by affirming that 'the subsequent records of his life too plainly prove that he fell into the snare'.[46]

At least some of Muir's reviewers found this unpalatable, which suggests the parameters of the discussion had shifted. In 1872, the *British Quarterly Review* found his argument potentially valid, but his method suspect. It argued that,

> [w]hen Sir William Muir hints his belief that in some parts of his career Mahomet was the subject of what we may call a Satanic inspiration, he is putting forth a view which he has a perfect right to maintain as a theological proposition, but he is treading on ground whither the historian of events and creeds must refuse to follow him.[47]

Imputing Satanic motivations to Mahomet is now a step too far. Muir's approach is also unusual when seen against the backdrop of Victorian 'naturalistic' interpretations of Islam. Having read Muir's text, the Austrian orientalist Aloys Sprenger remarked that just as 'the geologists manage to explain the revolutions of our planet by natural powers known to us', so too 'the origin of Islam is capable of explanation in a quite natural way, and we do not need to ascribe to the Devil an influence upon it, nor to other powers, which have ceased to be active in our time'.[48]

Most important of the responses to Muir's *Life of Mahomet* was that of Syed Ahmed Khan. Rarely consulted today, Khan was an Indian educationalist, reformer, judge and politician who had worked for the East India Company and supported the British during the 'Mutiny' of 1857.[49] His *A Series of Essays on the Life of Mohammed, and Subjects Subsidiary Thereto* (1870) owes its existence to Muir's text. Khan's is a voice of Muslim dissent, the first published in English challenging a portrayal of Mahomet. Starting with Muir, Khan proceeds to demolish what remained of the entire Christian mythology. His work was the beginning of a series of Muslim challenges that marked a new phase in the history of the English Mahomet.

Khan begins with praise. Muir's text is '[t]he best of all biographies of Mohammed from the pen of foreign authors, and the one which is executed in the most learned and masterly manner'. It is 'handsomely printed'. Furthermore, the 'extensive and intimate acquaintance of this talented author with Oriental literature is highly esteemed and justly appreciated by all educated Europeans'.[50] But Muir's *Life of Mahomet* also has its faults. Its author has chosen to base his work on the wrong authority – 'Wackadee' or Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Omar Ibn Waqid al al-Aslami – and 'the intention and animus with which the work was written are to be depreciated as having been the fruitful source of error and deficiency'. Khan invokes a reading public that stretches across the Empire, whose curiosity about Muir's work 'was only equalled by their impatience to peruse it'. But,

> no sooner was it found that the simplest and plainest facts connected with Islam and Mohammed had been strained and twisted and distorted, in short, subjected to the Procrustes' process in order to make them the indices or exponents of the author's prepossessions and prejudices, than the interest created by the announcement of the work fell, *instanter*, to zero. As to the young Mohammedans who were pursuing their study of the English literature, and were perfectly ignorant of their own theology, the perusal of the work under consideration raised in their youthful mind the question, if what Sir Wm. Muir has written is a misrepresentation of plain and simple facts, what are those facts in reality?[51]

Such considerations prompted Khan to write refuting Muir, and to offer his own alternative life of 'Mohammed'. They also led him back to examine the 'many European authors who have written works upon Islam and its founder'. Although Khan had been unable to obtain anything earlier than Maracci's Italian translation of the Qur'ān (1698), his sense of these earlier works is that they contain 'little else than mere abuse, and harsh and uncharitable expressions'. Even Maracci, held up as a model of early Arabist scholarship, 'appears never to have been able to satiate himself with malignant and disgusting vituperation'. Prideaux, whose *True Nature of Imposture* was still widely read, 'is another of those uncomprehending and intolerant writers. When any Mohammedan happens to dip into his book, he cannot repress a smile at the extreme ignorance of his subject which this *Christian* author displays in almost every page of his work'.[52]

Although Syed Ahmed Khan's position in the British imperial hierarchy makes him an unlikely subaltern iconoclast, the importance of this particular 'writing back' should not be underestimated. It brings to an end the preoccupations of medieval, early modern and early Enlightenment writers, few of whom ever considered potential Muslim readers. Khan's

approach vehemently rejects the Christian construction of Mahomet and subsequent orientalist ventriloquism, and asserts the authority of the Muslim reader, Quilliam's 'fellow subject'. A basic ignorance amongst British authorities of the 'simple and plain facts' of Islam and Muhammad was now unsustainable and, as Khan suggests, a totally new approach to writing Islam was required that responded to, incorporated and catered for Muslims as well as 'Europeans'. Thereafter, Muslim readers and their voices become profoundly important in contesting and reforming conceptions of the Prophet Muhammad in the 'West'.

Yet this was a two-way process. Khan was not alone, but only the first of a series of Indian Muslim scholars who responded to Muir and other authorities to create new versions of the biographical *Sira*, as Tarif Khalidi has noted. What emerges in work like Amir Ali's *The Spirit of Islam or the Life and Teachings of Muhammad* (1891) and Muhammad Iqbal's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930) is 'Muhammad the great teacher of humanity, mercy, and justice, and the prophet most in accord with the spirit of modernity'.[53] British writers were forced to rethink their assumptions about Muhammad in response to the urging of Muslim subjects and readers while, simultaneously, writers in the Muslim world were reshaping lives of the prophet and thereby generating 'a new breed of Islamic biographies' in response to what Khalidi calls a '"scientific" European assault on Muhammad'.[54] So while the parameters had changed, contestation remained.

From the establishment of a dominant life in English in some of the earliest printed books, through the schism of Reformation and the upheavals of civil, religious and intellectual transformation in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, to Carlyle's 'true prophet', elaborately crafted caricatures of Mahomet played an extraordinarily vital role in English (and later British) life. Private, public and national identities, cultural value, religious change and engagement with the wider world – all were articulated through this protean figure. These tales of Mahomet needed telling initially as a way of affirming Christian supremacy over 'false' Mahomet and Mahometanism at a time when Islam, in the form of the Ottoman Empire, was culturally, militarily and economically dominant. Their subsequent Reformation retellings continue to press this supremacy, but simultaneously conflate 'false' Mahomet with new religious enemies, without and within the nation state, to define English Protestantism. During and after the Civil Wars, Mahomet is drawn into domestic ideological debates concerning monarchical as well as religious

power, and is reclaimed by some as part of an agenda pressing for radical change. In more than two centuries of religious turmoil in England, tales of Mahomet are told and retold because they respond to questions – even insecurities – about the nature of divinity and of a divine Christ, because they define a 'true' faith and a 'true' cause, and because they help to explain the nature of a non-Christian world.

Events at the end of the twentieth and at the start of the twenty-first centuries have brought religion – and Islam in particular – to the fore in Britain once more. In this context a detailed understanding of the role played by misrepresentations of the prophet in early modern and Enlightenment England offers a framework to understand their persistent resurfacing in the present and the continuities and disjunctions involved. Given that modern Britain emerges out of this period, this resurfacing is hardly surprising. The previous chapters have demonstrated that English (and later British) wrangling with the figure of Mahomet is a rich seam running through the literary, historical and philosophical canon and, although often glossed over, these engagements are difficult to avoid. Furthermore, this book has shown how Mahomet is closely involved in debates that concern the development of an Anglo-Protestant national identity (and of Protestantism more generally); in structuring the wider world at the beginnings of empire; in defining and articulating toleration and relativism and thus the forging of 'enlightenment values'; and finally in the provocative unorthodoxies that, in combination with these other factors, would generate a contemporary, sceptical, secular culture. The mythologies of Mahomet that I have been tracing are, in all these respects, latent in Britain and Britishness.

Many factors are in play in a moment of crisis, not least the rapidly shifting politics of a complex contemporary global environment. Yet whether major international incident or minor press outrage, the frequent controversies that have surrounded the Prophet Muhammad in recent years have pressed this figure to a new media prominence and have generated troubling questions. Each has invariably involved the clash of myths about Mahomet – the latent and often grotesque figure of Christian mythology – with Muslim veneration for the prophet, often intentionally blurring the line between the two. Although the immediate contexts vary, these controversies demonstrate the ways in which in 'the West' Muhammad continues to be a caricatured projection of 'Western' anxieties surrounding Islam, a focal point for issues from free speech, civil rights and multiculturalism to radicalism, religious violence and women's rights.

Examples of this clash range from the obvious – the 'censorship' of the Qur'ān-burning episode in a London-based production of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* of 2005 and the brief furore that followed, or Pope Benedict's 2006 quotation of a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor on Mahomet and violence – to more complex examples, such as the controversies centred upon Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) or the *Jyllands-Posten* imagess of Muhammad in 2005.[55]

The Satanic Verses has often – and recently by Rushdie himself – been identified as an originary moment for 'what came after'.[56] Despite the author's initial insistence that the novel was 'fiction' and 'fantasy', the central figure of Mahound is explicitly created out of the building blocks of 'the medieval baby-frightener, the Devil's synonym' – Mahomet by another name.[57] When placed into the elaborate structure of the novel, the Mahound episodes demonstrate the stress placed on cherished religious narratives in the turmoil of migration; in the feverish dream-process of reconstruction that occupies these sections in the novel, the narrative of Mahound's life becomes an amalgam of Muslim and non-Muslim traditions, a unique and bizarre mix of Mahound the idol and Mahomet the heresiarch with a recognisable but distorted Muhammad of the *Sira*. Yet in the 'affair' that followed, and for a variety of political reasons, different sides used the conflict to air grievances that transformed the novel's exploration of transformation in dislocation into a vigorous assertion of the opposite – an unchanging and 'true' life of the Prophet Muhammad worn as a badge of identity, the solidity of which becomes ever more important at points of crisis.[58] For obvious reasons, such a narrative denies – or rather chooses to ignore – the continuing potency of mythologies of Mahomet in British culture, instead rendering the tradition outlined in this book unacknowledged and unspeakable.

The crisis that followed the publication of *The Satanic Verses* marked a point of representational paralysis that continues to the present day, reflected in the refusal of the British press to reproduce the Danish 'cartoons' in 2005/6 – although they were easily accessible on the Internet, demonstrating the pivotal role of new media in such situations.[59] In a less nuanced fashion than in Rushdie's novel, many of those images demonstrated how for some non-Muslims in the 'West' the figure of the Prophet Muhammad can still function as a blank slate on which are inscribed perceived Muslim ills – as a kind of Mahomet – while for others he has become utterly taboo. With powerful forces, both Muslim and non-Muslim, shaping the ways in which the Prophet Muhammad is encountered,

the figure of Mahomet remains unscrutinised, and is instead unquestioningly reproduced at the political and religious extremes.[60] It is only by placing Mahomet back into the history of his creation and manipulation that we can prevent him haunting contemporary engagements with the Prophet Muhammad and Islam.

Notes

PREFACE

1 Henry Stubbe, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* ed. Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani (London: Luzac & Co., 1911). Appendix, p. 195.

2 Tony Blair made these remarks in an interview with *Die Zeit* which appeared on 23 December 2008. In a speech at the University of Regensburg on 12 September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI controversially quoted a fourteenth-century text by the Byzantine Manuel II Paleologos asserting that Muhammad had issued a command 'to spread by the sword the faith he preached'. See the coverage in *The Guardian* (15 September 2006). The Danish cartoon controversy followed the publication of twelve images in *Jyllands-Posten* on 30 September 2005. This is analysed in detail in (itself controversial) Jytte Klausen's *The Cartoons That Shook the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

3 Jones was quoted in *The Huffington Post* (7 May 2011) and *The Guardian* (2 May 2011).

4 Tarif Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad: Narratives of the Prophet in Islam across the Centuries* (New York: Random House, 2009) p. vii.

5 Ibid. p. ix.

6 Tariq Ramadan, *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad* (London: Allen Lane, 2007) p. x.

7 Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld [2nd ed], 1993) p. 100. Having indicated the constructed nature of 'Mahomet', distinct from the historical Prophet Muhammad, hereafter I will dispense with the quotation marks.

8 Besides Khalidi's biographical study, recent popular biographies include Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1991), Barnaby Rogerson, *The Prophet Muhammad: A Biography* (London: Little, Brown, 2003) and Deepak Chopra, *Muhammad: A Story of the Last Prophet* (London: Harper Collins, 2010). Recent scholarship on Muhammad's biography is considerable. Useful examples are Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), Harald Motzki ed., *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) and Jaroslav

Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough: Reconstructing Arabian Myth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). An important recent addition is Jonathan E. Brockopp ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On the use of 'mythologies' in a medieval and early modern context, see the discussion of the term that begins Anthony Bale's *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms 1350–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

9 Dating (unless otherwise indicated) will represent the Common Era (CE) system, the Christian calendar and follow 'Old Style' rather than 'New Style' dating conventions.

10 The certainty of this date has been recently challenged by Stephen Shoemaker's detailed study *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

11 See Robert Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia, 2002) and Daniel, *Islam and the West* on this process.

12 A good example of this critical movement is Jonathan Burton's *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

13 The exceptions were those who travelled to Muslim lands and who converted to Islam. For examples of the many who did, see Nabil Matar's groundbreaking *Islam and Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and his recent *Britain and Barbary, 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005).

INTRODUCTION: FABRICATING MAHOMET

1 For a discussion of the use of the postcolonial notion of 'doubling' in this early modern context, see Matthew Dimmock, *William Percy's* Mahomet and His Heaven: *A Critical Edition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) n. 114, p. 27.

2 Thomas Coryat, *Mr Thomas Coriat to his friends in England sendeth greeting from Agra the capitall city of the dominion of the great Mogoll in the Easterne India, the last of October, 1616* (London: I. Beale, 1618) sig. D.1v–D.2r.

3 Coryat's life and travels are detailed further in M. Strachan, *The Life and Adventures of Thomas Coryat* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), and his travels into India traced more recently by Charles Nichol in 'Field of Bones', *London Review of Books* 21.17 (September 1999) pp. 3–7.

4 There has been a recent surge of interest in Coryat that, while interesting, seems to endorse this perspective. See Dom Moraes and Sarayu Srivatsa, *The Long Strider: How Thomas Coryate Walked from England to India in the Year 1613* (New Delhi: Viking, 2003) and R. E. Pritchard, *Odd Tom Coryate: England's Marco Polo* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004).

5 Coryat, *Mr Thomas Coriat to his friends in England*, sig. D.1v.

6 The *OED* records the first use of this word in 1613, but it was in use at least twenty years earlier. Possibly the first instance is in H. I.'s translation of Heinrich Bullinger's *Fiftie godly and learned sermons diuided into fiue decades* (London: Henry Middleton for Ralph Newberrie, 1577) in a connection between the 'Papiste' church and the church of 'Mahometanisme', p. 856.
7 Edward Terry, *A voyage to East-India. Wherein some things are taken notice of in our passage thither, but many more in our abode there, within that rich and most spacious empire of the Great Mogol* (London: T. W. for J. Martin and J. Allestrye, 1655) p. 271.
8 This mythology and its creation are comprehensively detailed in John Tolan's *Saracens* and Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West*.
9 Coryat, *Mr Thomas Coriat to his friends in England*, sig. D.1v–D.2r. This narrative is explored in considerably more detail in Chapter 1 of this book.
10 Ibid. sig. D.3r.
11 The genesis and evolution of this dominant life are best related in John Tolan's book *Saracens*.
12 Alexander Ross, 'A needful Caveat, or Admonition, for them who desire to know what use may be made of, or if there be any danger in reading the *Alcoran*', preface to the anonymous translation, *The Alcoran of Mahomet, translated out of the Arabick into French, by the Sieur Du Ryer, Lord of Malezair, and resident for the French king, at Alexandria. And newly Englished, for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities* (London: [s.n.], 1649) sig. D.4r–D.4v.
13 Meredith Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke. A Sermon preached at the Hospitall of Saint Katherine, adjoining unto her Majesty's Tower the 2. of October 1586, at the Baptizing of one Chinano, a Turke, born at Nigropontus* (London: Robert Waldegrave, 1587) p. 5r.
14 Coryat, *Mr Thomas Coriat to his friends in England*, sig. D.1r.
15 These relationships are discussed in Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary*; Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Anthony Parr, 'Foreign Relations in Jacobean England: The Sherley Brothers and the "Voyage of Persia"' in Jean-Pierre Marquelot and Michele Willems, *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp. 14–31.
16 See in particular Hakluyt's careful edition of the documents relating to the Anglo-Ottoman 'Capitulations' to remove Mahomet in Chapter 3 of this book.
17 Terry, *A voyage to East-India*, pp. 270–1.
18 Ibid. p. 271.
19 All Shakespeare references are based on Stephen Greenblatt [Gen. Ed.], *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York and London: Norton, 1997). There is some uncertainty about the authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, but it is usually attributed to Middleton. Colin Gibson ed., *Six Renaissance Tragedies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

20 Clinton Bennett, *In Search of Muhammad* (London and New York: Cassell, 1998) and Minou Reeves, *Muhammad in Europe: A Thousand Years of Western Myth-Making* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
21 Reeves, *Muhammad in Europe*, pp. 4–5.
22 Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937); Byron Porter Smith, *Islam in English Literature* (Beirut: American Press, 1939); Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Susan Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578–1582* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
23 Emily Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor: From* Alcazar *to* Othello (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Matthew Birchwood, *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640–1685* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007); Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning*; Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Nabil Matar, *Islam and Britain*; Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2008); Benedict Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). My own *New Turkes* similarly focuses on the figure of the 'Turk'.
24 Meticulously detailed and analysed in Skilliter's *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*.
25 The numbers who did convert have been the subject of some dispute. Nabil Matar's recent *Britain and Barbary* convincingly contests the version presented by Robert C. Davis in his *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) and, to a lesser extent, in Linda Colley's *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002).
26 Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar*, p. 48.
27 Quoted in Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. II (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978) p. 150.
28 This relationship is detailed in Ana Echevarria, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in Fifteenth Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) pp. 43–5.
29 Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p. 12.
30 Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995 reprint) p. 23 and *passim*.
31 For full title and details, see note 13 to this chapter.
32 Hanmer, *The baptizing of a Turke*, sig. A.7v–B.3r.

33 Thomas Newton, *A notable historie of the Saracens Briefly and faithfully descrybing the originall beginning, continuaunce and successe aswell of the Saracens, as also of Turkes, Souldans, Mamalukes, Assassines, Tartarians and Sophians. With a discourse of their affaires and actes from the byrthe of Mahomet their first péeuish prophet and founder for 700 yéeres space* (London: William How for Abraham Veale, 1575).

34 Birchwood, *Staging Islam in England,* and his 'Vindicating the Prophet: Universal monarchy and Henry Stubbe's biography of Muhammad', *Prose Studies* 29.1 (2007) 59–72. See also Humberto Garcia, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670–1840* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

35 G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) and Alastair Hamilton's *William Bedwell the Arabist, 1563–1632* (Leiden: E. J. Brill / Leiden University Press, 1985) and, with Francis Richard, *Andre Du Ryer and Oriental Studies in Seventeenth Century France* (Oxford: The Arcadian Library in association with Oxford University Press, 2004).

36 Ahmad Gunny, *The Prophet Muhammad in French and English Literature, 1650 to the present* (Markfield: The Islamic Foundation, 2010).

37 James R. Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and Its Enemies, 1660–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

38 Walter B. Cahn, 'The "Portrait" of Muhammad in the Toledan Collection' in Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas eds, *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002) pp. 50–60; Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

39 Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009); Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1997); Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*; John Moorhead, 'The Earliest Christian Theological Response to Islam', *Religion* 11 (1981) 265–74; Stefano Mula, 'Muhammad and the Saints: The History of the Prophet in the *Golden Legend*', *Modern Philology* 101 no. 2 (2003) 175–88; Michael R. Paull, 'The Figure of Mahomet in Middle English Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of North Carolina, 1969); R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Kenneth Baxter Wolf, 'The Earliest Spanish Christian Views of Islam', *Church History* 55.3 (1986) 281–93; Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation: Studien zur Fruhgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut and Stuttgart: Orient-Institut

der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, 1995); Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

40 In particular, see Tolan, *Saracens*.

41 John Tolan 'European Accounts of Muhammad's life' in Jonathan E. Brockopp ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, pp. 226–50, p. 236.

42 Ibid. pp. 237–40.

43 [William Langland], *The vision of Pierce Plowman now fyrste imprynted by Roberte Crowley* (London: R. Grafton for Robert Crowley, 1550). It was a great success, reprinted twice in the same year, with a new edition in 1561.

44 Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*, p. 197.

45 This can be translated as: 'For Saracens … have something resembling our belief,/ For they love and believe in one Lord almighty,/ And we, both learned and ignorant, believe in one God -/ Christian and unchristian believe in one God.' The orginal is quoted from William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman* [the B-text] ed., A. V. C. Schmidt. (London: J. M. Dent [Everyman], 1995). Unless indicated otherwise, all subsequent references come from this edition.

46 See, for instance, passus 3.329.

47 'This Makometh was a Christian man, and because he could not be a pope,/ Into Syria he went, and through his subtle wiles/ Tamed a dove, and fed her day and night./ The corn that she ate, he put in his ear;/ And when he preached among the people, or travelled to places,/ Then would the dove come to this clerk's ear/ Seeking food – and thus Makometh charmed her,/ And people then fell on their knees, for he swore in his preaching/ That the dove that came to him came from heavenly God/ As messenger to Makometh, telling him to teach mankind./ And thus though his wiles and a white dove/ Makometh brought men and women into misbelief,/ Who learned then, and still believe, his laws.'

48 'Men read that Makamede was a christened man,/ A courtly cardinal, a great clerk too,/ And intended to become a pope, a prince of holy church.' The C-text is normally dated to the early 1380s. Quoted in Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*, p. 199.

49 Wolf, 'The Earliest Spanish Christian Views of Islam', p. 291; also Tolan, pp. 136–7.

50 'And since our Saviour allowed the Saracens to be so deceived/ Through a Christian clerk accursed in his soul -/ But for fear of death I dare not tell truth,/ How English clerks feed a dove called Covetousness,/ And behave like Makometh, so no man speaks truth.'

51 Paull, 'The Figure of Mahomet', p. 181.

52 Ibid. p. 178.

53 Just 'as Macometis' law takes much from Christ's law, and mixes it with other laws, and thereby creates poison, so does Antichrist in the new sects'. From Wycliffe's sermon on Matthew 22.15; quoted in ibid. p. 176.

54 Wycliffe puts forward this argument in the *Vita Sacerdotum* in the context of the rise of what he saw as new sects within the Christian church. The passage is further discussed in ibid. p. 178.
55 Mahomet as idol in medieval writing is discussed in considerable detail in Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 105–26.
56 See also Tolan's discussion of the *Life of St Katherine* in ibid. p. 131.
57 Further examined in considerable detail in Paull, 'The Figure of Mahomet', pp. 196–252.
58 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 130.
59 Humphrey Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture fully displayed in the life of Mahomet. With a discourse annex'd, for the vindication of Christianity from this charge, etc.* (London: William Rogers, 1697) p. 31.
60 Henry Stubbe, *An Account*, p. 142.
61 However, Arnoud Vrolijk in the *DNB* suggests that Sale relied heavily on Marracci's earlier translation of 1698 in his own work: see 'Sale, George (*b.* in or after 1696, *d.* 1736)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24529, accessed 6 July 2010]. An excellent recent work on this topic is Ziad Elmarsafy's *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).
62 Although he used Sale's work extensively, Edward Gibbon described Sale as 'half a Musulman'. Other contemporaries (James Porter, for instance) read his attempt at objectivity as sympathy for Islam. See Vrolijk, 'Sale, George (b. in or after 1696, d. 1736)'.

CHAPTER 1 'WELL REHEARSED' IN 'BOOKS OLD': EARLY PRINT AND THE LIFE OF MAHOMET

1 Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* 3rd ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974). Umberto Eco's use of this term is quoted and utilised in terms of early print culture to great effect in Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and their Books, 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 9.
2 See footnote to the title of this chapter.
3 Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry* ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2nd ed. 1973) ll. 21–4 p. 105. Important work on the writing of history in this period includes F. Smith Fusner, *The Historical Revolution, English Historical Writing and Thought, 1380–1640* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), Arthur B. Ferguson, *Clio Unbound: Perception of the Social and Cultural Past in Renaissance England* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1979) and Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England Vol. II: c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).
4 Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 9. See also Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

1998) and David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

5 My use of 'secular' here recognises the difficultly in meaningfully distinguishing between religious and secular works in this period. Mary Jeremy, 'Caxton's *Golden Legend* and Varagine's *Legenda Aurea*' *Speculum* 21.2 (1946) pp. 212–21; C. W. R. Moseley, 'The Metamorphosis of Sir John Mandeville' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 4 (1974) pp. 5–25.

6 John V. Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. xx–xxi.

7 John Tolan gives a detailed discussion of attitudes and literature generated out of crusade conflict in ibid. pp. 105–34.

8 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490–1700* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), particularly pp. 185–9; the troubled interconnections between the 'peoples of the book' are explored in the essays comprising Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield eds, *The Religions of the Book: Chrsitian Perceptions 1400–1660* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

9 For further discussion of this aspect, see Matthew Dimmock, '"A Human Head to the Neck of a Horse": Hybridity, Monstrosity and Early Christian Conceptions of Muhammad and Islam' in Dimmock and Hadfield eds, *The Religions of the Book*, pp. 66–88.

10 One very useful discussion of the apocalyptic dimension to this conflict can be found in Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) and Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981).

11 Ranulf Higden, *Polycronicon* (Westminster: William Caxton, 1482) sig. A. 3v.

12 Ibid. sig. A. 2r.

13 Ibid. sig. A. 3v.

14 Its popularity is confirmed by the survival of around 120 manuscript copies. Michael Livingstone, 'More Vinland maps and texts. Discovering the New World in Higden's *Polychronicon*', *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004) pp. 25–44, p. 32.

15 John Taylor, *The* Universal Chronicle *of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) pp. 33, 17.

16 Ibid. p. 33; Gransden, *Historical Writing in England Vol. II*.

17 Taylor, *The* Universal Chronicle, p. 46.

18 All subsequent reference to this and the other primary texts in this chapter refer (unless otherwise indicated) to the earliest printed versions.

19 On Gerald of Wales, see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 258 and Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 168. Little is known of Langton's work on Islam.

20 Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 248r. Heraclius reigned as Byzantine Emperor from 610 to 641.

21 This ethnological division is profoundly important to a Christian conception of Islam in this and earlier periods, and stems from as early as Isidore of Seville's first century *Chronica maiora*, if not earlier. Isidore and others were already identifying the twelve sons of Ishmael with the twelve tribes of the Arabs. For more on this text and this concept, see Tolan, *Saracen*, pp. 10–12.
22 Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 248r.
23 The widely read text that purports to be the work of Methodius, bishop of Olympas (d. c. 311), is now known as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, written (Tolan suggests) by an anonymous Syriac author. It is a record of divine revelation that records Muslim aggression as 'both the punishment God metes out to sinful Christians and the "testing furnace" meant to try the true Christians before the ultimate Christian victory' (Tolan, p. 47). For a detailed analysis of this text, see Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 46–50.
24 Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, Passus XV ll. 398–409. Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 248v.
25 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 139.
26 Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 248v.
27 Ibid. f. 249r.
28 Ibid. f. 249v.
29 Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*, pp. 210–19. For further discussion of the 'Land of Cockaigne' and its contexts, see A. L. Morton, *The English Utopia* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1969).
30 Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 250r.
31 Ibid. f. 250r.
32 This is the central theme of Desiderius Erasmus in his 'A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks' [1530] pp. 201–266 in *Collected Works of Erasmus* Vol. 64 ed. Dominic Baker-Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
33 Higden, *Polycronicon*, ff. 250r–250v.
34 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 47.
35 Anon., *Pilules de Mahomet contre l'Epilepsie ou Mahometain. Recette tiree d'une Pharmacopee orientale et reproduite a l'aide de l'ecritura coufique*. Wellcome Ms. 3590 (mid-nineteenth century).
36 Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis* Opera vol. 8, *De principis instructione* ed. George F. Warner (London: HMSO, 1891) p. 68. Guibert's account of the death is translated and reproduced in Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 142–3.
37 Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 250v.
38 'And Archbishop Turpinus relates that the brassy statue of himself that Machomete built with his own hands stands on the seashore facing south. In that statue Machometus enclosed a legion of fiends through witchcraft. A Christian man who visits it is easily killed. But a Saracen leaves whole and sound. … The statue holds a mace in its right hand, and that mace shall first fall when a king is born in Gaul that shall renew all Spain with Christian laws. And when the mace falls then the Saracens will flee and leave their treasury.' Ibid. ff. 250v–251r.

39 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 133.
40 Only a fragment remains in the British Library of Caxton's original edition of this text, catalogued as [*Blanchardyn and Eglantine*] (Westminster: Caxton, 1490). The later edition is titled *The moste pleasaunt historye of Blanchardine, sonne to the King of Friz; & the faire lady Eglantine Queene of Tormaday, (surnamed) the proud ladye in loue* (London: Printed [by E. Allde] for William Blackewall, and are to solde at his shop, ouer against Guild-Hall Gate, 1595) sig. G. 3v. A further edition was printed by G. Shaw for William Blackewall in 1597.
41 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 133.
42 Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 251r.
43 Created by Felipe Bigarny between 1520 and 1522.
44 Most obviously applicable in this context is John Foxe's apocalyptic consideration of the 'Turk' in his *Acts and Monuments* – particularly in the second edition of 1570 – which is discussed in (among other places) Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 76–8 and 142–5. More illuminating on the wider context is Christopher Highley's recent *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. 54–79.
45 Ranulphus Higden, *Chronica Ranulphi Cistrensis monachi* [*Polychronicon*] (Westminster: William Caxton, 1482) – Travers 7 (University of Sussex Library). The signature of Richard Middleton and others' marks occur throughout the text.
46 Higden, *Chronica Ranulphi*, f. 248v.
47 Ibid. ff. 248r, 248v and 249r. The shelfmark of the Newberry copy is folio Inc. 9645. The similarities suggest these core elements were being collected for commonplace books.
48 Higden, *Polychronicon*, sig. A. 3v.
49 Anthony Bale, 'Christian Anti-Semitism and Intermedial Experience in Late Medieval England' in Dimmock and Hadfield eds, *The Religions of the Book*, pp. 23–44, p. 25; Jeremy, 'Caxton's *Golden Legend* and Varagine's *Legenda Aurea*', p. 212.
50 Stefano Mula, 'Muhammad and the Saints', p. 186.
51 Ibid. p. 186.
52 Ibid. p. 176.
53 Jacobus de Voragine, *The golden legend* (Westminster: William Caxton, 1493) f. 399r; Higden, *Polycronicon*, f. 248r.
54 Mula, 'Muhammad', p. 180.
55 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 31.
56 Discussed in Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 168.
57 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 257.
58 Ibid. p. 257.
59 Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 136, 154.
60 Mula, 'Muhammad', p. 183.
61 See for instance Nabil Matar, 'Anglo-Muslim Disputation in the Early Modern Period' in Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock eds,

Cultural Encounters Between East and West, 1453–1699 (Aldershot: Cambridge Scolars Press, 2005) pp. 29–43.

62 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, pp. 126–7.

63 Voragine, *The golden legend*, f. 400v.

64 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, pp. 125–6.

65 Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 168–9; Dimmock, 'A Human Head', pp. 74–6.

66 Henry Bergen ed., *Lydgate's* Fall of Princes 4 vols (London: Early English Text Society, 1924) I, pp. ix–x.

67 As well as a patron of Lydgate, Gloucester (1390–1447) was also perhaps the most important patron of Italian humanism in fifteenth-century England – see Susanne Saygin, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390–1447) and the Italian Humanists* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). The popularity of Lydgate's text is suggested by the survival of more than thirty manuscript copies.

68 Patricia May Gathercole ed., *Laurent de Premierfait's* De Cas Des Nobles Hommes et Femmes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968) p. 33; Bergen, *Lydgate's* Fall of Princes, I, p. x.

69 John Lydgate, *Here begynnethe the boke calledde Iohn bochas descriuinge the falle of princis princessis [and] other nobles* (London: Richard Pynson, 1494). All quotation to this point comes from bk. 9, sig. E. 6v.

70 For Vincent of Beauvais, the erroneous miracles of the dove and the bull and others suggested the 'model of Moses'. See Daniel, *Islam and the West*, n. 82 p. 369.

71 Lydgate, *fall of princis*, sig. E. 6v.

72 Bergen, *Lydgate's* Fall of Princes, IV p. 344.

73 John Tolan translates and reproduces Guibert de Nogent's twelfth-century account of this extraordinary floating tomb in his *Saracens*, pp. 143–4. For later references, in particular to the mention of the floating tomb in William Percy's play *Mahomet and His Heaven*, see Matthew Dimmock, *William Percy's* Mahomet and His Heaven: *A Critical Edition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) pp. 36–8, 192–3.

74 A letter from Pius II to Mehmed II, known as the *Epistula ad Mahumetem*, sought to persuade him to convert following the conquest. It was almost certainly never sent. The letter has provoked a great deal of critical attention – for further details, see Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) pp. 147–52.

75 C. W. R. D. Moseley, 'Metamorphoses', p. 2. More than 300 manuscripts copies remain extant.

76 Ibid. p. 25.

77 John Mandeville, *Here begynneth the boke of Iohn Maunduyle* (London: Richard Pynson, 1496) sig. C. 1v.

78 Ibid. sig. C. 1v–C. 2r.

79 Ibid. sig. C. 1v.

80 Frank Grady, '"Machomete" and *Mandeville's Travels*', p. 273. John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, ed. C. W. R. D. Moseley (London: Penguin, rev. ed. 2005) p. 27.

81 Michael R. Paull, 'The Figure of Mahomet', p. 187.
82 'Christian priests do not force people to serve God, for they should be an example to men of how to live well, but they give a bad example, and therefore when the people should spend holy days in the church serving God, instead they go to the tavern to indulge in gluttony day and night, eating and drinking like beasts who don't know when they have had enough … [Christian men] … should be simple, meek and truthful and do alms as Jesus Christ did, in whom they believe. And he [the Sultan] said they [the Christians] are so covetous that for a little silver they sell their children, their sisters and their wives and one man takes another man's wife, and no-one is faithful. And therefore, he said, God has given these lands to us, and not because of our strength but because of your sins. For we know well that when you serve your God well he will help you, so that no man shall win against a people who serve their God well …' Mandeville, *Here begynneth the boke of Iohn Maunduyle*, sig. C. 2r.
83 Although see Frank Grady's persuasive recent analysis of the Sultan's words in his *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp. 45–72. Also compare the similar purpose behind Higden's presentation of 'Saracen' views of Christian behaviour.
84 Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 48.
85 Malcolm Letts, *Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations*, p. 93 n.1.
86 Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 191.
87 See note following for details on Peter Engels and John Tolan's work in this area. The implications of their work for the study of Mandeville is laid out in Matthew Dimmock, 'Mandeville on Muhammad: Texts, Contexts and Influence' in Ladan Niayesh ed., *Mandeville and Mandevillian Lore in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) pp. 92–107.
88 William of Tripoli, *Notitia de Machometo: De statu Sarracenorum* ed. Peter Engels, pp. 52–74, and John Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 203–9.
89 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 204.
90 East's *The voiag[e] and trauayle, of syr Iohn Maundeuile knight*, sig. G.1v.
91 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 204.
92 Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005) p. 120.
93 Mandeville, *Here begynneth the boke of Iohn Maunduyle*, sig. C. 2v.
94 Ibid. sig. C. 2v.
95 William of Tripoli, *Notitia*, §1, p. 196 and [pseudo-] William of Tripoli, *De statu Sarracenorum*, §1, pp. 270–2. Also quoted in Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 204–5.
96 Mandeville, *Here begynneth the boke of Iohn Maunduyle*, sig. C. 3r–C. 3v.
97 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 154.
98 See notes 30–2 to this chapter.
99 BL Sloane 1464. See also Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, pp. 248–9.

100 Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 202.
101 BL Royal 17 C xxxviii. On the *Livre des Merveilles* see Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 252.
102 Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 75. See also Malcolm Letts, 'The Source of the Woodcuts in Wynkyn de Worde's Edition of Mandeville's *Travels*, 1499', *The Library* s5.6 (1951) 141–53.
103 Depicted in Jean de Mandeville, *Reysen und Wandershafften durch das Gelobte Land* (Basel: Bernard Richel, ca. 1482).
104 John Mandeville, *The voiag[e] and trauayle, of syr Iohn Maundeuile knight, which treateth of the way toward Hierusalem, and of maruayles of Inde with other ilands and countries.* (Imprinted at London: In Breadstreat at the nether ende, by Thomas East, 1568); John Mandeville, *The voyages and trauailes of Sir John Mandeville knight Wherein is treated of the way towards Hierusalem …* (London: Thomas Este, 1582?).
105 John Mandeville, *The voyages & travels of Sir John Mandevile, Knight wherein is set down the way to the Holy Land …* (London: printed for Rich. Chiswell, B. Walford, Mat. Wotton, and Geo. Conyers, 1696) p. 69.
106 Nathalie Filliat, 'Images at bois graves dans les editions incunables du *Voyage autour de la terre* de Jean Mandeville (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Lyon II, 2010) and in generous correspondence with the author.
107 Oswei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1945) pp. 70, 76.
108 Andrew Boorde, *A compendyous regiment of a dyetary of healthe* (London: In Fletestrete at the sygne of the George nexte to Dunstones churche by Wyllyam Powell, 1547) sig. I. 2v.
109 Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, pp. 115–16.
110 'Moxa' – from China – is recorded as a potential medicine by Robert Hooke in 1675 (*OED*), but the *OED* does not record the first use of 'moxibustion' until 1822.
111 These images – and other examples – are all reproduced in Jacques Lavalleye, *Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Lucas van Leyden: The Complete Engravings and Woodcuts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967). See also Max J. Friedländer, *Lucas van Leyden* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co, 1963).
112 For a further discussion of the ways in which Biblical episodes can temporally move in this way, I recommend Mitchell B. Merback's *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (London: Reaktion, 1999).
113 The significance of the turban in early modern England is considered in detail in Nabil Matar, 'Renaissance England and the Turban' in David R. Blanks ed., *Images of the Other: Europe and the Muslim World before 1700* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1997) pp. 39–55 and the note on this subject in Dimmock, *William Percy's* Mahomet and His Heaven, p. 185.

114 *Here begynneth a lytell treatise of the turkes lawe called Alcaron. And also it speketh of Machamet the Nygromancer*, sig. A.2r. The assertion that the word *occidite* means 'kill' in Turkish is curious. In Turkish, kill is *oldurmek*, and in Arabic it is commonly *qatala*.

115 It features on the titlepage to *Here begynneth a lytell treatise*, and on Riccoldo, see Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 250.

116 Quoted in Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 146.

117 Quoted in ibid. p. 147.

118 Christopher St German, *Here after followeth a lytell treatise agaynst Mahumet and his cursed secte / & fyrst foloweth the introduccyon* (London: Peter Treveris, 1531) f. xviii. See later in the chapter for further discussion of this text and its sources.

119 The now controversial Doom frescoes (with some newspaper reports suggesting they have been targeted by Muslim 'extremists') depicting Mahomet tormented by devils at the Basilica di San Petronio in Bologna, painted by Giovanni da Modena in 1415, and at the Camposanto in Pisa, painted by Buonamico Buffalmacco between 1332 and 1342, are key examples. On the latter, see Robert Mills, *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure & Punishment in Medieval Culture* (London: Reaktion, 2005) pp. 85–6. This motif appears again much later in England, however, in the image of Mahomet (alongside Christ and Moses) in Thomas Heywood's *The hierarchie of the blessed angells* (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1635) p. 270.

120 Andrew Chertsey's *The arte or crafte to lyue well and to dye well* [Arte de bien vivre et de bien mourir] (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 1505) fol. C.xx^{r}.

121 There are a number of examples – one features prominently in ibid. fol. lxxxix^{v}, which was also printed by De Worde.

122 Edward Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935) p. 190 (illustration no. 518).

123 Richard Rex, 'New Additions on Christopher St German: Law, Politics and Propaganda in the 1530s', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 59.2 (2008) pp. 281–300. See also J. Christopher Warner, 'A note on St German's *In Mahumetem & eius sectam*', *Moreana* xxxiv (1997) no. 129, pp. 45–6.

124 St German, *Here after followeth a lytell treatise*, f. iv.

125 Erasmus, 'A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks' [1530], also known as 'De Bello Turcico'. Further discussion of this aspect of Erasmus's text can be found in Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 20–1.

126 St German, *Here after followeth a lytell treatise*, f. iv.

127 The sources are listed on f. xixv. See also Rex, 'New Additions', n. 12 p. 285 for more detail on Methodius, as well as note 23 to this chapter.

128 Translated and discussed in Sarah Henrich and James L. Boyce, 'Martin Luther – Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam: Preface to the *Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum* (1530), and Preface to Bibliander's Edition of the *Qu'ran* (1543)', *Word and World* 16.2 (1996) pp. 250–66.

129 B. Netanyahu, 'Alfonso de Espina – was he a new Christian?', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 43 (1976) pp. 107–65, p. 122.
130 St German, *Here after followeth a lytell treatise*, f. 2r.
131 Ibid. f. 2v.
132 Ibid. f. 2v.
133 Ranulf Higden, *Polycronycon* (Southwerke: Peter Treueris at ye expences of Iohn Reynes boke seller at the sygne of saynt George in Poules chyrch-yarde, 1527).
134 St German, *Here after followeth a lytell treatise*, f. 3r.
135 Ibid. f. 4r.
136 Ibid. f. 4v.
137 Ibid. f. 5r.
138 Ibid. ff. 20v–21r.
139 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 181.
140 See note 73 to this chapter.
141 Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 249.
142 *The Alcoran of Mahomet*. For a detailed evaluation of this text and the controversy that surrounded it, see Matthew Birchwood, *Staging Islam,* pp. 64–8.
143 St German, *Here after followeth a lytell treatise*, ff. 5v–7v.
144 John Wyclif, *De Fide Catholica*, quoted in R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam,* p. 82.
145 Rex, 'New Additions', p. 285.
146 Ibid. n. 13 p. 285.

CHAPTER 2 'MOST LIKE TO MAHOMET': RELIGIOUS HISTORY AND REFORMATION MUTABILITY

1 This subject has been explored by Eamon Duffy in *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1250–1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). In response, see also Elizabeth Salter, 'What Kind of Horse is it? Popular Devotional Reading during the Sixteenth Century' in Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield eds, *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) pp. 170–93.
2 On this, see Roger Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (Baltimore: The Walters Art Gallery, 1988).
3 Eamon Duffy, 'Continuity and Divergence in Tudor Religion' pp. 171–206 in R. N. Swanson ed., *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (Oxford: Blackwell for The Ecclesiastical Society, 1996) p. 194.
4 Ibid. p. 201.
5 The whole sequence is repeated again later in the text.
6 Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art* 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1964) pp. vii and 1.
7 Ibid. pp. 14–15.
8 Ibid. pp. 15–16.

9 Ibid. pp. 75–82.
10 Duffy, 'Continuity and Divergence', p. 202.
11 Joan Evans, *Pattern: A Study of Ornament in Western Europe from 1180–1900* 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931) 1 p. 141.
12 Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories*, n.1 p. 11; Evans, *Pattern*, n. 5 p. 141.
13 Guy Delmarcel, *Los Honores: Flemish tapestries for the Emperor Charles V* (Antwerp: SDZ/ Pandora, 2000) p. 20.
14 Guy Delmarcel, *Flemish Tapestry: from the 15th to the 18th Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999) p. 101.
15 Jerry Brotton and Lisa Jardine, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East & West* (London: Reaktion, 2000) p. 65.
16 Ibid. p. 82.
17 Ibid. p. 86.
18 Duffy, 'Continuity and Divergence', p. 193. This book saw several subsequent editions.
19 Leslie Mahin Oliver, 'The Procession of the Virtues in *A Booke of Christian Prayers*', *Harvard University Bulletin* 6.3 (1952) 302–12, p. 304.
20 Duffy, 'Continuity and Divergence', p. 201.
21 Oliver, 'The Procession', n. 9 p. 307. See also Samuel C. Chew, 'The Iconography of *A Book of Christian Prayers* (1578) Illustrated', *Huntington Library Quarterly* VIII (1945) 293–305.
22 Oliver, 'The Procession', p. 312.
23 Quoted in Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the Influence of Continental Prints, 1558–1625* (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre, 1997) p. 258.
24 Thomas Nelson, *The blessed state of England: Declaring the svndry dangers which by Gods assistance, the Qveenes most excellent Maiestie hath escaped in the whole course of her life … together with the rare titles of commendation which the great emperor of the Turkes hath lately sent in his Letters to her Highnesse* (London: for William Wright, 1591) sig. B.3r.
25 Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 258.
26 As discussed in relation to Higden in Chapter 1, p. 30.
27 Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 260.
28 The background to this move is discussed in ibid. pp. 258–62.
29 For an illuminating translation and discussion of the Song of Solomon, see Mary Dove, *Glossa ordinaria* vol. 22, *In canticum canticorum* [Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis; vol. 170] (Turnholti: Brepols, 1997).
30 Thomas Drant, *Two sermons preached the one at S. Maries Spittle on Tuesday in Easter weeke. 1570. and the other at the Court at Windsor the Sonday after twelfth day, being the viij. of Ianuary, before in the yeere. 1569. by Thomas Drant Bacheler in Diuinitie* (London: John Daye, 1570) sig. E.2v.
31 David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 121.
32 Dimmock, *New Turkes*, chapter 1, particularly pp. 20–41.

33 Drant, *Two sermons*, sig. E.3r.

34 John Bale, *The image of both Churches after the most wonderfull and heauenly Reuelation of saint Iohn the Euangelist* (London: Thomas East, c. 1570) sig. B.2v; David Chytraeus, *A postil or orderly disposing of certaine epistles vsually red in the Church of God, vppon the Sundayes and holydayes throughout the whole yeere. Written in Latin by Dauid Chytraeus, and translated intoo English by Arthur Golding* (London: By Henrie Bynneman. For Lucas Harrison and George Bishop, 1570) p. 402.

35 William Fulke, *A sermon preached at Hampton Court on Sonday being the 12. day of Nouember, in the year of our Lord. 1570. Wherein is plainly proued Babylon to be Rome, both by Scriptures and doctors* (London: John Awdely, [1571]) sig. F.3r.

36 John Northbrooke, *Spiritus est vicarius Christi in terra. A breefe and pithie summe of the Christian faith made in fourme of a confession, with a confutation of the papistes obiections and argumentes in sundry pointes of religion, repugnaunt to the Christian faith* (London: John Kingston for W. Williamson, 1571) p. 107.

37 Baxter Wolf, 'The Earliest Spanish Christian Views', pp. 289–93.

38 Thomas Cooper, *The true and perfect copie of a godly sermon preached in the minister at Lincolne, by the reuerend father in God, Thomas L. Bishop of Lincolne the .28. of August* (London: Henrie Middleton for Rafe Newberie, [1575]) sig. B.5r.

39 Edwin Sandys, *Sermons made by the most reuerende Father in God, Edwin, Archibishop of Yorke, primate of England and metropolitane* (London: Henrie Midleton for Thomas Charde, 1585) p. 346.

40 This association is well established in this and earlier periods, but was widely circulated in Thomas Mason's abridgement (with additions) of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, titled *Christs victorie ouer Sathans tyrannie* (London: George Eld and Ralph Blower, 1615), which states that 'About this time, the detestable sect of Mahomet began to take place, which well agrees with the number of that beast signified in the Reuelation 666' (p. 26).

41 William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, passus 15, ll. 397–408. See the discussion of this episode in the Introduction, pp. 13–17.

42 William Fulke, *Two treatises written against the papistes the one being an answere of the Christian Protestant to the proud challenge of a popish Catholicke: the other a confutation of the popish churches doctrine touching purgatory & prayers for the dead* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1577) p. 16.

43 The Bull was intended to support the uprising of the northern rebels in the same year, and condemned Elizabeth as a heretic and a pretended queen. The context for the Bull is discussed in Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation*, p. 334. See also Dimmock, *New Turkes*, p. 75.

44 Wycliffe's *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, quoted in Maurice Hugh Keen, *England in the Late Middle Ages* 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Routledge, 2003) p. 187. Wycliffe's use of Mahomet is discussed further in the Introduction, p. 15.

45 Thomas More, *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of Thomas More* Vol. 6, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (pt. 1) ed. Thomas M. C. Lawler, Germain Marc'hadour and Richard C. Marius (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981) p. 3.
46 More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, p. 407.
47 William Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* ed. Henry Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940) p. 25.
48 See Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 29–35 for a consideration of the implications of this debate for notions of the 'Turk' – although Mahomet is largely absent from that discussion.
49 William Tyndale, *Practyse of Prelates. Compyled by the faythfull and godly learned man, Wyllyam Tyndale* (London: Anthony Scoloker and Willyam Seres, 1548) sig. C.2r.
50 Harry Clark, 'The Publication of the Qur'an in Latin: A Reformation Dilemma', *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 15 (1984) 3–12; Katya Vehlow, 'The Swiss Reformers Zwingli, Bullinger and Bibliander and Their Attitude to Islam (1520–1560)', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 6 (1995) 229–54; Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*; Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān.*
51 See above, pp. 77–9.
52 Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 111.
53 See, for example, the heavily marked prefatory chapters in a copy of this text in the library of the ninth and tenth Earls of Northumberland at Petworth House (uncatalogued, but recorded in the 1690 *Catalogus Bibliothecae Petworthianae* – PHS/5377, f. 30v).
54 Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 116.
55 Sarah Henrich and James L. Boyce, 'Martin Luther – Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam', p. 262.
56 Ibid. p. 266.
57 Heinrich Bullinger, *A commentary vpon the seconde epistle of S Paul to the Thessalonia[n]s. In which besydes the summe of oure faythe, ther is syncerelye handled & set forth at large, not onely fyrst co[m]myng vp & rysyng with the full prosperyte & dominion, but also the fall and vtter confusion of the kyngdome of Antichriste: that is to say of Machomet & the byshop of Rome* (London: James Nicolson, 1538) sig. C.2r.
58 Ibid. sig. D.7r.
59 Ibid. sig. D.7v.
60 Ibid. sig. E.2r.
61 Theodore Bibliander, *A godly consultation vnto the brethren and companyons of the Christen religyon. By what meanes the cruell power of the Turkes, bothe may, and ought for to be repelled of the Christen people …* (Antwerp: Radulphe Bonifante, 1542) sig. A.4r.
62 Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom*, p. 114.
63 Bibliander, *A godly consultation*, sig. C.4v.
64 Ibid. sig. C.5r.

65 Ibid. sig. C.5r–C.5v.
66 Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, p. 536.
67 Such accusations had been made by Erasmus and others throughout the sixteenth century, and are usefully detailed (albeit in a polemical context) by Jacques-Davy Duperron in his *Luthers Alcoran being a treatise first written by the learned Cardinall Peron, of famous memory, against the Hugenots of France, and translated into English by N.N.P.* (s.l.: s.n., 1642) pp. 94–5.
68 Bibliander, *A godly consultation*, sig. C.6v.
69 Jean Calvin, *A harmonie vpon the three Euangelists. Matthew, Mark and Luke with the commentarie of M. Iohn Caluine: faithfully translated out of Latine into English, by E. P.* (London: George Bishop, 1584) p. 95.
70 Ibid. p. 340.
71 John Knox, *The appellation of Iohn Knoxe from the cruell and most iniust sentence pronounced against him by the false bishoppes and clergie of Scotland, with his supplication and exhortation to the nobilitie, estates, and co[m]munaltie of the same realme* (Geneva: J. Poullain and A Rebul, 1558) p. 49r. This assertion was to become another common feature of later English writing on Mahomet.
72 Ibid. p. 49r.
73 Ibid. pp. 49r–49v.
74 The return to Mahometan idolatry in English writing is considered at length in Chapter 3.
75 Bale, *The image of both Churches*, sig. B.2r–B.2v.
76 Bibliander, *A godly consultation*, sig. D.1r.
77 Ibid. sig. D.1r.
78 This myth had, however, been endorsed by Riccoldo and from thence was reproduced by St German. See Chapter 1.
79 Bibliander, *A godly consultation*, sig. D.1v–D.2r.
80 Ibid. sig. D.7v.
81 Ibid. sig. D.7v.
82 Ibid. sig. C.8v.
83 Johannes Sleidanus, *A famouse cronicle of oure time, called Sleidanus Commentaries concerning the state of religion and common wealth, during the raigne of the Emperour Charles the fift … Translated out of Latin into Englishe, by Ihon Daus* (London: Ihon Daie for Nicholas Englande, 1560) sig. K.2v.
84 Ibid. sig. H.4r. See also footnote to the title of this chapter.
85 See note 46 to this chapter.
86 Duperron, *Luthers Alcoran*, p. 26.
87 Ibid. p. 27.
88 Ibid. pp. 113–14.
89 Ibid. p. 116.
90 Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation*, p. 61.
91 Thomas Lanquet, *An epitome of chronicles Conteyninge the whole discourse of the histories as well of this realme of England, as al other cou[n]treys, with the succession of their kinges, the time of their reigne, and what notable actes they*

did … gathered out of the most probable auctours (London: William Seres for Thomas Marshe, 1559) p. 3a.

92 Ibid. pp. 158a–158b.

93 Ibid. p. 158a.

94 Richard Reynoldes, *A chronicle of all the noble emperours of the Romaines from Iulius Caesar, orderly to this moste victorious Emperour Maximilian, that now gouerneth* (London: Thomas Marshe, 1571) f. 167a.

95 Ibid. ff. 167a–167b. See also the brief discussion of this lineage in Chapter 1, note 21.

96 Reynoldes, *A chronicle*, f. 168b.

97 Huntington Library copy: Rare Books no. 22039, f. 168b.

98 Curione, *A notable historie*.

99 Ibid. p. 3a; Bibliander, *A godly consultation*, sig. C.7v.

100 Curione, *A notable historie*, pp. 3b–4a.

101 Ibid. p. 4a.

102 Ibid. p. 5a.

103 This text seems to have been widely known in early modern England, with numerous versions remaining extant. See C. Sallustius Crispus, *Catilina* ed. A. Kurfess (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1957).

104 Curione, *A notable historie of the Saracens*, p. 7a.

105 Lodowick Lloyd, *The consent of time disciphering the errors of the Grecians in their Olympiads, the vncertaine computation of the Romanes in their penteterydes and building of Rome, of the Persians in their accompt of Cyrus, and of the vanities of the Gentiles in fables of antiquities, disagreeing with the Henrewes, and with the sacred histories in consent of time. Wherein is also set downe the beginning, continuance, succession, and ouerthrowe of kings, kingdomes, states, and gouernments* (London: George Bishop and Ralph Newberie, 1590).

106 Ibid. pp. 291–2.

107 Ibid. p. 291.

108 Ibid. p. 292; Curione, *A notable historie*, p. 5b.

109 Lloyd, *The consent of time*, p. 292.

110 Ibid. p. 290.

111 Ibid. p. 291.

112 Ibid. p. 293.

CHAPTER 3 OLD MAHOMET'S HEAD: IDOLS, PAPISTS, AND *MORTUS ALI* ON THE ENGLISH STAGE

1 For more on The Queen's Men and their repertory in this period, and the place of *Alphonsus* within it, see Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp. 156–60.

2 All quotations from *Alphonsus* are taken from Robert Greene, *Alphonsus King of Aragon 1599* ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Oxford University Press [Malone Society], 1926).

3 Thereafter the figure of 'Mahomet' has a fairly consistent presence on the English stage – see the Conclusion to the present work, but also the Introduction to Dimmock ed., *William Percy's* Mahomet and His Heaven, pp. 30–9.
4 The identification of Edward with Josiah and Elizabeth with Hezekiah is explored in detail in Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), particularly pp. 26–36 and 113–27.
5 Kevin LaGrandeur, 'The Talking Brass Head as a Symbol of Dangerous Knowledge in *Friar Bacon* and in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*', *English Studies* 80.5 (1999) 408–22, p. 410.
6 All quotations are taken from Robert Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* ed. Daniel Seltzer (London: Edward Arnold [Regents Renaissance Drama Series], 1964).
7 LaGrandeur, 'The Talking Brass Head', p. 418.
8 Ibid. p. 418.
9 Early modern stage properties, their uses and reuses are explored in detail in Jean MacIntyre, *Costumes and Scripts in the Early Modern Theatres* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1992).
10 All quotations are taken from Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* ed. J. R. Mulryne (London: A & C Black [New Mermaids], 1989). See also the section on this play in Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 107–10.
11 All quotations are taken from Robert Greene (?), *John of Bordeaux or The Second Part of Friar Bacon* ed. William Lindsay Renwick (Oxford: Malone Society Reprints, 1936).
12 See the discussion of staging Islam in Matthew Dimmock, 'Materialising Islam on the Early Modern Stage' pp. 159–84 in Sabine Schuelting and Ralph Hertel eds, *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East: Performing Cultures* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).
13 These details are given on printed titlepages – for example, John Clapham's *The historie of England* (London: Printed by Valentine Simmes for Iohn Barnes, dwelling at Fleete-streete, at the signe of the Great Turke, 1602) or the mysterious Mr Smith's *Scarronnides, or, Virgil travestie. A mock-poem* (London: printed by J. H. for Chr. Coningsby, at the Golden Turks-Head over against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet, 1692). See also Matar, 'Renaissance England and the Turban' and Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558–1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 214–22.
14 Randle Holme, *The academy of armory, or, A storehouse of armory and blazon containing the several variety of created beings, and how born in coats of arms, both foreign and domestic …* (Chester: Printed for the author, 1688) p. 395.
15 This version of Muslim idolatry is reproduced in a number of early contexts – see, for instance, the reproduction of William of Tyre's *Histoire d'Outremer* in Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 132.
16 Michel Baudier, *Histoire Generale de la Religion des Turcs* (Paris: Claude Cramoisy, 1625).

17 '[Enter] Mahomet with an Alcoran and syluer crescent on his Turbant' (1.1.s.d.]. This is further discussed in Dimmock ed., *William Percy's* Mahomet and His Heaven, pp. 183, 194.
18 The inventories of the Lord Admiral's Men, of which this item is only one small element, were first printed by Malone in his *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (1709) and had been found at Dulwich College. They have since disappeared. They are detailed and reproduced in Foakes and Rickert eds, *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 319.
19 W. W. Greg ed., *Henslowe's Diary* Pt. II (London: A. H. Bullen, 1908) p. 167. The full reference for the printed edition is Robert Greene, *The comicall historie of Alphonsus, King of Aragon As it hath bene sundrie times acted* (London: Thomas Creede, 1599).
20 Greg ed., *Henslowe's Diary* Pt. II, p. 167.
21 Ibid. p. 167.
22 Daniel Vitkus ed., *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) p. 236.
23 This poem is reproduced alongside Peele's companion piece, 'An Eclogue Gratulatory' in David Horne ed., *The Life and Minor Works of George Peele* Vol. I (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961) pp. 220–30.
24 The documents recording the working relationship between Daborne and Henslowe, which is recorded from 1613, are reproduced in full with commentary in the Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project – see www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/essays/dabornememorandum.html.
25 All references come from Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turned Turk* in *Three Turk Plays* ed. Daniel Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
26 Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 136–7.
27 Discussed in Chapter 1.
28 The latter was the source for Greene's play *John of Bordeaux*, probably belonging to the early 1590s.
29 'Mammet' and variations of it commonly signify an idol in English texts, as discussed in Chapter 1.
30 John Bourchier, *Arthur of Brytayn The hystory of the moost noble and valyaunt knyght Arthur of lytell brytayne, translated out of frensshe in to englisshe by the noble Iohan bourghcher knyght lorde Barners, newly imprynted* (London: W. Copland for Roberte Redberne, 1560) sig. N. 2v.
31 Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso in English heroical verse, by Iohn Haringto[n]* (London: Richard Field, 1591) p. 92.
32 Ibid. p. 323.
33 Estienne de Maisonneufvre, *Gerileon of England. The second part of his most excellent, delectable, morall, and sweet contriued historie continuing his meruailous deeds of arms …* (London: T. Scarlet? for Cuthbert Burbie, 1592) sig. L. 2v.
34 William Caxton, *The moste pleasaunt historye of Blanchardine,* sig. G. 3v.
35 Ibid. sig. G. 3v.
36 Ibid. sig. K. 2r.

37 The impact of this important text is usefully detailed by Jennifer Fellows in her edition: Richard Johnson, *The Seven Champions of Christendom (1596/7)* ed. Jennifer Fellows (Aldershot: Ashgate [Non-Canonical Early Modern Popular Texts], 2003).
38 Ibid. p. 17.
39 Ibid. p. 18.
40 Ibid. p. 90.
41 Ibid. p. 92.
42 Ibid. p. 93.
43 Termagant was also a regular presence in earlier *Chansons*.
44 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, pp. 239–40.
45 Discussed in Chapter 1.
46 These 'difficult questions' are explored in relation to John Bunyan, Henry Stubbe, John Toland and others in Chapter 4.
47 The seminal work for such matters is Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), but see Burke's return to it (alongside other responses) in his 'Afterword' to Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield eds, *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Amersham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 209–14.
48 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 342.
49 The complex portrayal of the figure of the 'Turk' in *Selimus* is discussed in Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 170–7.
50 The phrase is embedded in the title of Daniel Vitkus' *Three Turk Plays*, and is used to refer to this post-*Tamburlaine* drama in Mark Hutchings, 'The "Turk Phenomenon" and the Repertory of the late Elizabethan Playhouse', *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 16 (2007), http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emis/si-16/hutcturk.htm.
51 Irving Ribner, 'Greene's Attack on Marlowe: Some Light on *Alphonsus* and *Selimus*', *Studies in Philology* 52 (1955) 162–71.
52 Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine parts I and II* in *The Complete Plays* ed. Mark Thornton Burnett (London: Everyman, 1999). All subsequent references come from this edition.
53 Marlowe's sources are analysed in Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman eds, *Christopher Marlowe: The Plays and Their Sources* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 69–168.
54 The term 'overreacher' is now ubiquitous in Marlovian studies, but originates with Harry Levin's *The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954).
55 This ambiguity in this scene might be a consequence of Marlowe's reading of the Qur'ān for the final lines of this speech. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer who noted the similarity between Tamburlaine's 'For he is God alone, and none but he' (5.1.200) with 'There is no God but He' in the Qur'ān, 2:255.
56 Greene wrote for the Queen's Men, whereas Marlowe wrote for the Admiral's Men. Robert Greene, *Perimedes the blacke-smith a golden methode, how to vse*

the minde in pleasant and profitable exercise (London: John Wolfe for Edward White, 1588) sig. A.3r.

57 Richard A. Martin, 'Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and the Language of Romance', *PMLA* 93.2 (1978) 248–64, p. 248.

58 Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 137 and Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition in Renaissance England* (Washington: Folger Books, 1986) p. 98.

59 Stephen Greenblatt puts forward this possibility in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) p. 202.

60 This drama is listed and further discussed in Hutchings, 'The "Turk Phenomenon".'

61 Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 171–7.

62 This drama is analysed in detail in Paull, 'The Figure of Mahomet', pp. 196–252.

63 The relevance of the term 'non-belief' or 'unbelief' is explored in detail in the essays collected in Michael Hunter and David Wootton eds, *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

64 On London's civic stages, see Jonathan Burton's groundbreaking discussion in his *Traffic and Turning*, pp. 161–81.

65 A period that begins with the despatch of William Harborne to the Ottoman capital in 1578 and ends with the death of Elizabeth and her foreign policy in 1603.

66 Skilliter, *William Harborne*, pp. 100–1. Hakluyt's similarly careful editing of the *valide sultan* Safiye's letters to Elizabeth is detailed in the first chapter of Bernadette Andrea's *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp. 12–29.

67 A. L. Horniker, 'William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations', *Journal of Modern History* xiv (1942) 289–316, p. 309.

68 John Aylmer to the Lord Mayor of London, 23 September 1582. London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) COL/RMD/PA/001 f.199r Item 403.

69 This policy of 'de-Islamicisation' is explored further in relation to the 'Turk plays' in Dimmock, *New Turkes*, pp. 162–97.

70 3. 348 – quoted in Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p. 191.

71 This is discussed further in ibid. pp. 180–3.

72 Ibid. p. 153.

73 Claire Jowitt, 'Political allegory in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean 'Turk' plays: the case of Dekker and Marston's 'Lust's Dominion' (1599–1600) and John Mason's 'The Turke' (1606–8)', *Comparative Drama* 37 (2003) 411–43, p. 437.

74 Alan R. MacDonald, 'James VI and I, the Church of Scotland, and British Ecclesiastical Convergence', *The Historical Journal* 48.4 (2005) 885–903, p. 901.

75 Charles W. A. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: the Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 200.
76 Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p. 120.
77 Harington to Barlow, July 1606 (Theobalds) in John Harington, *The Letters and Epigrams of John Harington together with The Prayse of Private Life* ed. Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930) pp. 119–21. Quoted in Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI & I* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003) pp. 236–7.
78 Ibid. p. 121.
79 See note 24 to this chapter.
80 These details are related in Book 1 of Homer's *Illiad*, and would undoubtedly have been well known to Greene and the literate members of his audience.
81 Mortus Ali (the obscure etymology is discussed in the text presented earlier) is a representation of the historical Ali ibn Abi Talib (598–661 CE), the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. Shia Muslims consider Ali to be the first Imam, whereas Sunni Muslims regard him as the fourth and final Caliph.
82 The 'cou[n]trees of Sophy' are mentioned in Jacques de Bourbon, *The begynnynge and foundacyon of the holy hospytall* (London: Robert Copeland, 1524), while references to the Soldan appear in medieval romance (and can also refer to the Persian monarch). An early printed example is John Gower, *This book is intitled confessio amantis* (London: William Caxton, 1483) Bk. II f. 46r.
83 English attitudes to Islamic schism are analysed in detail in Hafiz Abid Masood, 'From Cyrus to Abbas: Staging Persia in Early Modern England' (University of Sussex: Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, 2011).
84 Anthony Jenkinson, 'A compendios and briefe declaration of the iourney of M. *Anth. Ienkinson*' in Richard Hakluyt, *The principal nauigations, voyages, traffiques and discoueries of the English nation made by sea or ouer-land, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the earth* (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1599–1600) pp. 343–52, p. 349.
85 Anthony Jenkinson, 'Certayne extractes of the voyage of maister Antony Ienkinson into Persia, in the yeere 1561' in Richard Willes, *The history of trauayle in the West and East Indies, and other countreys lying eyther way, towardes the fruitfull and ryche Moluccaes* (London: Richard Jugge, 1577) pp. 322v–324r.
86 Jenkinson, 'A compendios and briefe declaration', p. 351.
87 Anthony Parr has persuasively argued that the etymology of 'Mortus Ally' (Ali ibn Abi Talib) can be traced through the 'Mortus', a corruption 'of the Persian 'murtaza' meaning chosen or approved, and may reflect a Western perception of 'Ali as a martyr'. Anthony Parr ed., *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) note to s.d. p. 64.
88 Willes, *The history of trauayle*, p. 325v.
89 Hakluyt, *The principal nauigations*, Bk. I p. 398.
90 Willes, *The history of trauayle*, p. 325v.

91 Ibid. p. 325v.
92 This volume was originally published in Venice in 1594 as *Historia della Guerra fra Turchi, et Persiani divisa*, and was translated into English by Abraham Hartwell, who dedicated it to Archbishop Whitgift.
93 Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, *The history of the warres betweene the Turkes and the Persians. Written in Italian by Iohn-Thomas Minadoi, and translated into English by Abraham Hartwell* (London: John Windet for John Wolfe, 1595) p. 41.
94 Ibid. p. 44.
95 Ibid. p. 44.
96 Ibid. pp. 44–5.
97 Ibid. p. 40.
98 Julia Schleck considers the nature of authenticity and the Sherleys in her recent *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in Travel Writing, 1575–1630* (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2011) pp. 61–92.
99 Thomas Nashe, *Haue with you to Saffron-walden. Or, Gabriell Harueys hunt is vp* (London: John Danter, 1596) sig. C.4v. This section is quoted and briefly discussed (with different conclusions) in Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, pp. 232–3.
100 Discussed in Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, p. 233.
101 Willes, *The history of trauayle*, p. 326v. Also see Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, p. 232.
102 Nashe, *Haue with you*, sig. C.4v.
103 Leo Africanus, *A geographical historie of Africa, written in Arabicke and Italian by Iohn Leo a More, borne in Granada, and brought vp in Barbarie* (London: George Bishop, 1600) p. 154. 'Leshari' here refers to the Sharia, or Sunnis who follow the Sharia. 'Imamia' refers to the Imamate that defines Shi'a Islam.
104 George Abbot, *A briefe description of the whole worlde Wherein is particularly described all the monarchies, empires, and kingdomes of the same, with their academies* (London: T. Judson for John Browne, 1599) sig. C.3v.
105 Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the religions obserued in all ages and places discouered, from the Creation vnto this present* (London: William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613) p. 294.
106 Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 12.
107 Paolo Giovio, *A shorte treatise vpon the Turkes chronicles, compyled by Paulus Iouius byshop of Lucerna, and dedicated to Charles .v. Emperour* (London: Edwarde Whitchurche, 1546).
108 Minadoi, *The history,* p. 46.
109 See note 40 to Chapter 2.
110 The implications of this prohibition for Percy's depiction of Mahomet in this play are considered in further detail in Dimmock ed., *William Percy's* Mahomet and His Heaven, p. 32, particularly note 135.
111 Ibid. pp. 22–6.
112 Ibid. p. 167.

113 The effect of the ninth Earl's imprisonment on his family is detailed in Mark Nicholls' excellent '"As Happy a Fortune as I Desire": the Pursuit of Financial Security by the Younger Brothers of Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland', *Historical Research* (1992) 296–314, pp. 297–9.

114 For more details on Nixon's extraordinary life, see Anthony Parr, 'Nixon, Anthony (*fl.* 1592–1616)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20206, accessed 6 July 2010]. Nixon also wrote the source pamphlet for Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*.

115 Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 8.

116 Thomas Harriot, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia of the commodities there found and to be raysed, as well marchantable, as others for victuall, building and other necessarie vses for those that are and shalbe the planters there; and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants* (London: R. Robinson, 1588) p. 29.

117 Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, pp. 74–5 n. 190–3.

118 Ibid. p. 74 n. 190–3.

119 Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, p. 313.

120 Anthony Nixon, *The Three English Brothers Sir Thomas Sherley his trauels, with his three yeares imprisonment in Turkie* (London: Adam Islip?, 1607) sig. H.2v.

121 Robert's spouse, in the play designated simply as 'Niece to the Sophy', was instead a Circassian lady named Teresia – there remain a number of double portraits of the couple. See Bernadette Andrea, 'Lady Sherley: The First Persian in England?', *The Muslim World* 95 (2005) 279–95.

122 Schleck, *Telling True Tales*, pp. 61–92.

123 Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian princes against them. Together with the liues and conquests of the Othoman kings and emperours* (London: Adam Islip, 1603) sig. A.4v.

124 John Denham, *The Sophy* (London: n.p., 1642) pp. 14, 15 and 20; Robert Baron, *Mirza. A tragedie, really acted in Persia, in the last age* (London: Humphrey Moseley; T. Dring, 1647) pp. 4–5, 6 and 11. Both plays are discussed in Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, pp. 69–95.

125 Thomas Herbert, *A relation of some yeares travaile begunne anno 1626. Into Afrique and the greater Asia, especially the territories of the Persian monarchie* (London: William Stansby and Jacob Bloome, 1634) pp. 152–61; Commonplace Book, probably by Robert Mustow – BL Sloane 2117.

CHAPTER 4 BUNYAN'S DILEMMA: SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY IMPOSTURE, LIBERTY AND TRUE MAHOMETS

1 John Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners, or, A brief and faithful relation of the exceeding mercy of God in Christ, to his poor servant John Bunyan …* (London: George Larkin, 1666) pp. 26, 28–9.

2 Ibid. p. 26.
3 Ibid. p. 26.
4 Ibid. p. 26.
5 'The Baines Note', BL Harley 6848 ff. 185–6. Discussed at length by David Riggs in *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004) pp. 327–30.
6 William Vaughan, *The Golden-Groue* (London: Simon Stafford, 1600) sig. C. 4v.
7 A manuscript copy of the text is held in the British Library – 'The famous book entitled De Tribus Impostoribus', BL Stowe 47. See also S. Berti, 'The first edition of the *Traite des trois imposteurs*, and its debt to Spinoza's *Ethics*' in M. Hunter and D. Wootton eds, *Atheism*, pp. 183–220.
8 Bunyan, *Grace abounding*, p. 27.
9 David Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865) p. 119.
10 See Chapter 1.
11 John Bunyan, *A defence of the doctrine of justification, by faith in Jesus Christ: shewing, true Gospel-holiness flows from thence. Or, Mr. Fowler's pretended design of Christianity, proved to be nothing more then to trample under foot the blood of the Son of God and the idolizing of man's own righteousness* (London: Francis Smith, 1673) p. 91.
12 Ibid. p. 91.
13 Ibid. p. 91.
14 Robert G. Collmer, 'John Bunyan' in Andrew Hass, David Jasper and Elisabeth Jay eds, *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 575–90, p. 580.
15 Ibid. pp. 580–1.
16 See Tyndale, *An Answer*, pp. 25 and 53, and Knox, *The appellation of Iohn Knoxe*, p. 48v.
17 Jean Calvin, *The sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon the fifth booke of Moses called Deuteronomie faithfully gathered word for word as he preached them in open pulpet; together with a preface of the ministers of the Church of Geneua, and an admonishment made by the deacons there … Translated out of the French by Arthur Golding* (London: Henry Middleton for George Bishop, 1583) p. 1031.
18 Erasmus, 'A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks', p. 211.
19 Calvin, *The sermons of M. Iohn Calvin*, p. 1031.
20 Ibid. p. 1041.
21 Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, p. 199.
22 Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning*, p. 56.
23 Ibid. pp. 56–64.
24 On Wheelock's aborted refutation and the circumstances surrounding it, see Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning*, pp. 89–91. See also Toomer, pp. 223–5 for a discussion of Pococke's attitudes towards religion in general, and specifically to Christianity and Islam. The full title of Pococke's

influential text is: *Specimen historiae Arabum, siue, Gregorii Abul Farajii Malatiensis, De origine & moribus Arabum succincta narratio, : in linguam Latinam conversa, notisque è probatisimis apud ipsos authoribus, fusiùs illustrata. / Operâ & studio Eduardi Pocockii …* (Oxford: Excudebat H. Hall, impensis Humph. Robinson in Coemeterio Paulino, ad insigne trium Colombarum, 1650).

25 William Bedwell, *Mohammedis imposturae : that is, A discouery of the manifold forgeries, falshoods, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer Mohammed with a demonstration of the insufficiencie of his law, contained in the cursed Alkoran ; deliuered in a conference had betweene two Mahometans, in their returne from Mecha. Written long since in Arabicke, and now done into English by William Bedwell. Whereunto is annexed the Arabian trudgman, interpreting certaine Arabicke termes vsed by historians: together with an index of the chapters of the Alkoran, for the vnderstanding of the confutations of that booke* (London: Richard Field, 1615).

26 The reliance of the Cluniac project on translation is extensively detailed in James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam,* and in Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*.

27 Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning*, p. 61.

28 Bedwell, *Mohammedis imposurae*, sig. A.2v and see Toomer, who describes the text as 'an impudent forgery by a sixteenth-century Christian, perhaps not even a native Arabic speaker'; Toomer, p. 61.

29 Bedwell, *Mohammedis imposurae*, sig. G.4v.

30 Ibid. sig. N.1r–N.1v.

31 The assertion of the prophet's authorship of the Qur'ān – still current in some extreme Christian positions – had been an important element of medieval constructions of Mahomet, but becomes absolutely central to seventeenth-century conceptions of Mahomet's imposture. It is completely at odds with orthodox Islamic views, which assert that God's words were revealed to Muhammad and recorded verbatim in the Qur'ān.

32 The *OED* suggests that this is the first example of this particular spelling of the prophet's name, and I have found no earlier examples to contradict this position.

33 Bedwell, *Mohammedis imposurae*, sig. A.4v. Bedwell questions the quality of Arrivabene's translation.

34 Ibid. sig. A.2v–A.3r.

35 Ibid. sig. A.3r.

36 Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 1.

37 Alexander Ross, 'A needful Caveat', p. 1. These assertions of authorship were, of course, designed to undercut assertions of divine revelation.

38 Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 60.

39 Ibid. p. 26.

40 Ibid. p. 111. The *Machumetis Saracenorum principis* was reprinted in a second edition in the same year, and in a later 1550 edition, and copies of all three remain in private, cathedral and university libraries in England.

41 Mandeville, *Here begynneth a lytell treatyse or booke names Johan Mau[n] deuyll knight* (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 1499) sig. I.4v.
42 Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, sig. *.4v.
43 Ibid. p. 199.
44 Ibid. pp. 207–9.
45 Ibid. p. 207.
46 Ibid. p. 210.
47 Ibid. p. 199.
48 Ibid. p. 199.
49 George Sale, *The KORAN, commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed, translated into English immediately from the Original Arabic; with explanatory Notes taken from the most approved Commentators. To which is prefixed a preliminary discourse by George Sale, Gent …* (London: C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, 1734).
50 Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, p. 199.
51 Ibid. p. 202.
52 Ibid. p. 280.
53 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 418.
54 Louis LeRoy, *Of the interchangeable course, or variety of things*, p. 98r.
55 Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, pp. 202–3
56 John Gower, *Mirour de L'omme (Mirror of Mankind)* ed. Burton Wilson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992).
57 John Donne, *Poems, by J. D. With elegies on the authors death* (London: Miles Flesher for John Marriot, 1633) p. 4.
58 See, for instance, M. van Wyk Smith, 'John Donne's *Metempsychosis*', *The Review of English Studies* 24.94 (1973) pp. 141–52.
59 Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'Symbol and Meaning in Donne's *Metempsychosis or The Progresse of the Soule*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 22.1 (1982) 69–90, p. 84.
60 Ibid. p. 85.
61 Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, p. 211.
62 Ibid. p. 211.
63 Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas his pilgrimes In fiue bookes …* (London: William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), p. 1505.
64 Matthew Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, pp. 15–16.
65 On Du Ryer, see Gunny, *The Prophet Muhammad*, pp. 9–10.
66 Sale, *The KORAN*, p. vi.
67 Birchwood, *Staging Islam in England*, p. 64. Thomason dated the text to 7 May.
68 Cotton Mather quotes from the 1649 edition in *A Pastoral Letter to the English Captives in Africa from New England* (Boston, 1698) p. 8. Sale's *Koran* was also important for Thomas Jefferson, as detailed in Kevin Hayes, 'How Thomas Jefferson Read the Qur'an', *Early American Literature* 39.3 (2004) 247–61.
69 'The Translator to the Christian Reader' in *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, sig. A.2r–A.2v.

70 Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, pp. 65–6.
71 'The Translator to the Christian Reader', sig. A.2v.
72 Ross would extend these themes further in his own *Pansebeia: or a view of all religions in the world* (London: James Young for John Saywell, 1653).
73 Walter Oakeshott, 'Sir Walter Ralegh's Library', *The Library* 23.4 (1968) 285–327, p. 287. The *Life of Mahomet* is mostly based on the Arabic-speaking Spaniard Miguel de Luna's *La verdadera historia del Rey don Rodrigo* (1603).
74 Walter Ralegh, *The life and death of Mahomet the conquest of Spaine together with the rising and ruine of the Sarazen Empire* (London: Ralph Hodgkinson for Daniel Frere, 1637).
75 'The Life of Mahomet' in *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, p. 400.
76 *The Famous Tragedie of Charles I* (London: s.n., 1649) p. 4. Quoted and analysed in detail in Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, p. 59.
77 Alexander Ross, 'A needful Caveat' in *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, sig. Ee.1r.
78 Ibid. sig. Ff.2r.
79 Alexander Ross, *Pansebeia*.
80 Ross, 'A needful Caveat', sig. Ee.1v. Denying the publication of the Alcoran also made the English authorities no better than their Mahometan counterparts, because as Milton had affirmed in his *Areopagitica*, 'the Turk upholds his *Alcoran*, by the prohibition of printing'. John Milton, *Areopagitica; a speech of Mr. John Milton for the liberty of vnlicens'd printing* (London: [s.n.], 1644) p. 29. A number of echoes of Milton's *Areopagitica* in *The Alcoran of Mahomet* suggest Ross was deliberately responding to it – their differences are exemplified in divergent notions of reading 'promiscuously'.
81 Ross, 'A needful Caveat', sig. Ee.2r.
82 On the difficult circumstances of publication, see Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, pp. 64–5.
83 Ross, 'A needful Caveat', sig. Ff.3v.
84 Ibid. sig. Ff.2v–Ff.3r.
85 Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, p. 199; this is a direct borrowing from Giles Fletcher: Giles Fletcher, *The policy of the Turkish empire* (London: John Windet for William Stansby, 1597) p. 2v.
86 Ralegh, *The life and death of Mahomet*, p. 14.
87 Ross, 'A needful Caveat', sig. Ee.3r.
88 LeRoy, *Of the interchangeable course, or variety of things*, p. 98v.
89 Fletcher, *The Policy of the Turkish Empire*, p. 2v.
90 Florimand de Raemond, *L'Antichrist* (Lyon, 1597) p. 206, quoted in Michael J. Heath, *Crusading Commonplaces: La Noue, Lucinge and Rhetoric against the Turks* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1986) p. 48 [translation my own, with assistance from Dr William McEvoy].
91 John Hardyng, *The chronicle of Ihon Hardyng in metre* (London: Richard Grafton, 1543) fol. C15v.
92 Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus linguae Romanae & Britannicae tam accurate congestus, vt nihil pene in eo desyderari possit …* (London: Henry Wykes, 1565) sig. Ooo.3v.

93 John Cotta, *A short discouerie of the vnobserued dangers of seuerall sorts of ignorant and vnconsiderate practisers of physicke in England profitable not onely for the deceiued multitude, and easie for their meane capacities, but raising reformed and more aduised thoughts in the best vnderstandings: with direction for the safest election of a physition in necessitie* (London: R. Field for William Jones and Richard Boyle, 1612) p. 101 and *The triall of vvitch-craft shewing the true and right methode of the discouery: with a confutation of erroneous wayes* (London: George Purslowe for Samuel Rand, 1616) p. 61.

94 Thomas Ady, *A candle in the dark shewing the divine cause of the distractions of the whole nation of England and of the Christian world* (London: Robert Ibbitson, 1655) pp. 43–4.

95 Samuel Harsnett, *A declaration of egregious popish impostures to with-draw the harts of her Maiesties subiects from their allegeance, and from the truth of Christian religion professed in England, vnder the pretence of casting out deuils. Practised by Edmunds, alias Weston a Iesuit, and diuers Romish priestes his wicked associates* (London: James Roberts, 1603) sig. A.3v.

96 William Bedwell, *Mahomet vnmasked: Or, a discoverie of the manifold forgeries, falshoods, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer Mahomet …* (London: Thomas Dewe, 1624). It is notable that the UCL copy of this edition is bound together with an anti-papal tract titled *Miracles Unmasked* (1625), James I's *Daemonologie* (1613) and *ΑΣΤΡΟΔΦΟΜΑΝΑ: The Madness of Astrologers* (1624).

97 Kevin Sharpe, '"An Image Doting Rabble": The Failure of Republican Culture in Seventeenth-Century England' pp. 25–56 in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Swicker eds, *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution* (London: University of California Press, 1998) p. 33.

98 John Milton, *The life and reigne of King Charls, or, The pseudo-martyr discovered with a late reply to an invective remonstrance against the Parliament and present government: together with some animadversions on the strange contrariety between the late Kings publick declarations … compared with his private letters, and other of his expresses not hitherto taken into common observation* (London: W. Reybold, 1651) sig. A.8r.

99 Ibid. p. 92.

100 Ibid. sig. A.8r-*A.1v.

101 Gerald MacLean argues that Milton did not see Islam as a religion but as a political deceit in his 'Milton, Islam and the Ottomans' in Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer eds, *Milton & Toleration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 284–98.

102 Milton, *The life and reigne*, pp. 184–5.

103 Ibid. p. 186.

104 Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous poems by Andrew Marvell, Esq …* (London: Robert Boulter, 1681) p. 127. The poem is reproduced with extensive commentary in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* ed. Nigel Smith (London: Pearson, 2003) pp. 281–98.

105 Smith, *The Poems*, p. 292 n. 177.
106 'Letter No. 2,624 of the Clarendon collection, written in 1647' quoted in Fox, *Journal*, 125–6, n, 4, in turn quoted in Andrea, *Women and Islam*, p. 57.
107 Andrea, *Women and Islam*, p. 58.
108 William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian people called Quakers* (London, 1722) p. 258, quoted in Andrea, *Women and Islam*, p. 60.
109 Andrea, *Women and Islam*, p. 60.
110 There are five examples of this conflation in *A New-England-fire-brand quenched* (London: s.n., 1678) and another in *The arraignment of popery* (London: s.n., 1667).
111 George Fox, *To the Great Turk and his King at Argiers together with a postscript of George Pattison's taking the Turks and setting them on their own shoar* (London, Printed for Ben. Clark, 1680) p. 1.
112 Ibid. p. 2.
113 Editions appeared in Amsterdam (1698), Dublin (1730), Philadelphia (1796), Fairhaven, Vermont (1798), Glasgow (1799) and – intriguingly – in Calcutta (1820). More on Prideaux's influence in the United States can be found in Thomas S. Kidd, '"Is it Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil?" Early American Uses of Islam', *Church History* 72.4 (2003) 766–90, p. 773.
114 Recommendation of Convocation to Archbishop of Canterbury 20 March 1701. Lambeth Palace Library CONV IX/7 f. 2v.
115 Prideaux, *The True Nature*, p. iv.
116 Ibid. p. xiii.
117 Prideaux, *Letter to the Deists*, pp. 4–5.
118 Ibid. pp. 7–8.
119 Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture*, p. xx.
120 MacCulloch, *Reformation*, p. 210.
121 Islip had printed Richard Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes* in 1603.
122 Thomas Heywood, *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*, p. 283.
123 This is the only extant image in any English text of this or earlier periods that I have been able to find that depicts Mahomet writing the 'Alcoran' – again erroneously affirming his authorship.
124 Giordano Bruno, *Spaccio de la Bestia Triofante, proposto da Gioue* (London: John Charlewood [original imprint is fictitiously credited to Paris], 1584).
125 Arthur Bury was the author of *Naked Gospel* (1690), William Freke of the *Vindication of the Unitarians* (1690), and Nye of the *Letter of Resolution Concerning the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation* (1695). A discussion of Stubbe and Toland follows later in this chapter. Each of these authors and their contribution to the controversy is discussed in Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, pp. 108–10.
126 Humberto Garcia, 'A Hungarian Revolution in Restoration England: Henry Stubbe, Radical Islam, and the Rye House Plot', *The Eighteenth Century* 51.1–2 (2010) 1–26, p. 1.

127 The extent of Toland's interest in Bruno, and his involvement in the publication of the *Spaccio*, is considered in detail in Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, pp. 150–4.

128 Coryat was discussed at the beginning of the Introduction, but the details of the others' popular volumes are as follows: George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (London, 1615), Fynes Morrison, *An Itinerary written by Fynes Moryson, Gent.* (London, 1617), Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant* (London, 1636). The nature and impact of travel in the Ottoman empire in this period is expertly analysed in Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

129 John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and 'Early Enlightenment' Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 393.

130 John Locke, *A letter concerning toleration humbly submitted* (London: for Awnsham Churchill, 1689) p. 54.

131 Ibid., p. 57.

132 Alastair Hamilton, 'Addison, Lancelot (*b.* 1632, *d.* 1703)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24529, accessed 21 July 2011].'

133 Lancelot Addison, *The First State of Mahumedism being an exact account of Mahomed, the author of the Turkish religion, his prophesies about his coming, pedigree, parents, tribe, birth, education, marriages, filthiness of life, pretended revelation, retirement, collections and composure of his Alcoran, of his conventicles at Mecca, where he gained his first proselytes, &c* (London: for Will Crook, 1678) sig. A.2r–A.3v. Two editions of this text followed in the following year, one with the same title, the other titled *The life and death of Mahumed, the author of the Turkish religion* (London: William Crooke, 1679), another example of a printer attempting to cash in on a title specifically concerning Mahomet.

134 Addison, *The First State*, p. 35.

135 Ibid. p. 115 – see also pp. 117–19.

136 Ibid. pp. 27, 30 and sig. A.2v.

137 Ibid. pp. 18–19.

138 Joseph Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans* (Exeter: S. Farley for Philip Bishop and Edward Score, 1704) preface, pp. 9 and 10.

139 See, for instance, Addison's acknowledgement of this debt: *The First State*, p. 100.

140 Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, p. 101.

141 Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning*, pp. 289–92. Prideaux refused and the chair was taken by Roger Altham.

142 Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture*, p. xvi.

143 Ibid. p. 15.

144 Ibid. p. 31. Addison had made precisely the same point in his opening dedication.
145 Ibid. p. 38; p. 37
146 Ibid. pp. 102–3. This is again something Addison had done.
147 Henry Stubbe, 'The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism' (copy of 1701). University of London Library MS537, f. 122. As there are substantial differences between the various manuscript copies and the printed edition, I quote from this manuscript where necessary, and from the print copy in cases where the two appear to be identical.
148 Ibid. f. 120.
149 Stubbe, *An Account*, pp. 93–4.
150 Garcia, 'A Hungarian Revolution in Restoration England', pp. 10 and 17.
151 Jacob, *Henry Stubbe*, pp. 75–6.
152 Stubbe, *An Account*, p. 97.
153 Ockley produced work – often translations from the Arabic – concerned with the Muslim history after Muhammad. See particularly *The conquest of Syria, Persia and Ægypt, by the Saracens: containing the lives of Abubeker, Omar and Othman, the immediate successors of Mahomet* (London: for R. Knaplock, J. Sprint, R. Smith, B. Lintott and J, Round, 1708) and *Sentences of Ali, son-in-law of Mahomet* (London: for B. Lintott, 1717).
154 Henry Stubbe, 'The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism', f. 72.
155 Stubbe, *An Account*, p. 97.
156 Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture*, p. 41.
157 Ibid. p. 42.
158 Ibid. p. 50.
159 Ibid. p. 55.
160 Henry Stubbe, 'The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism', ff. 62–3.
161 Ibid. f. 62.
162 Ibid. f. 1.
163 Ibid. f. 3.
164 Jacob, *Henry Stubbe*, pp. 66–70.
165 Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture*, p. 104.
166 The officially sanctioned nature of Prideaux's work can be seen in the interest taken by Thomas Tenison, Archibishop of Canterbury, in its progress to the press. See the letter to him from C. Trimnell, 29 June 1697, Lambeth Palace Library ms 953 item 127. George Sale, in *The KORAN*, criticises Prideaux repeatedly, often for his misunderstanding or misuse of sources. See pp. 51, 52, 64, 65 (n. 1) and 149.
167 George Thomason quoted by Mordechai Feingold in 'Stubbe, Henry (1632–1676)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26734, accessed 6 July 2010].
168 Henry Stubbe, 'The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism', f. 1. This was moved to the start of Chapter 8 in Stubbe, *An Account*, p. 141.
169 Garcia, 'A Hungarian Revolution in Restoration England', p. 3.

170 John Toland, *Nazarenus: or, Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity* (London: J. Brotherton, J. Roberts and A. Dodd, 1718) p. 46.
171 Jacob, *Henry Stubbe*, p. 158.
172 Toland, *Nazarenus*, p. 4.
173 Ibid. p. 4.
174 Ibid. p. 16.
175 Ibid. p. 17.
176 Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft*, p. 127.
177 Ibid. p. 132.
178 Abdulla Mahumed Omar, *Mahomet No Imposter* pp. 165–88 in *Miscellanea Aurea: or the Golden Medley* (London: A. Bettesworth and J. Pemberton, 1720) p. 166.
179 Ibid. p. 169.
180 Ibid. p. 172.
181 Ibid. p. 181.
182 As Garcia points out, Charles Blount, a deist, also 'plagiarized passages from Stubbe's manuscript in his letters to Hobbes and John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester, a notorious freethinker'. I agree with Garcia's following suggestion that 'Stubbe's work was well known by the 1690s'. Garcia, 'A Hungarian Revolution in Restoration England', p. 19.

CONCLUSION: *MAHOMET* DISCOVERED

1 Voltaire, *Mahomet The Imposter. A Tragedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, By His Majesties Servants*. Adapted by James Miller and James Hoadly (London: J. Watts and B. Dod, 1744) sig. A.3v.
2 'The Translator to the Christian Reader' in *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, sig. A.2r–A.2v. Voltaire's play is considered in its French context in Gunny, *The Prophet Muhammad*, pp. 96–106.
3 Voltaire, *Mahomet*, sig. A.2v.
4 Harold L. Bruce, 'Period of Greatest Popularity of Voltaire's Plays on the English Stage', *Modern Language Notes* 33.1 (1918) 20–3, p. 22.
5 Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an*, p. 82.
6 Henrie, Comte de Boulainvilliers, *The life of Mahomet. Translated from the French original written by the Count of Boulainvilliers* (London: W. Hinchliffe, 1731) sig. A.2v. See also Gunny, *The Prophet Muhammad*, pp. 113–23.
7 Elmarsafy, *The Englightenment Qur'an*, p. 82.
8 Voltaire, *Mahomet*, sig. C.1r.
9 Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 33.
10 Ibid. p. 57.
11 Percy's *Mahomet and His Heaven*, if ever played, was probably a domestic entertainment.
12 Voltaire to Thierot, August 1738, quoted in Elmarsafy, *The Englightenment Qur'an*, p. 84.

13 Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an*, p. 36.
14 Ibid. pp. 35–6.
15 See Ibid. pp. 32–5.
16 George Sale, *The Koran.* There are many examples of Sale correcting Prideaux – see, for example, p. 38 n. 1, p. 39 n. 2, pp. 51, 52 and 64.
17 Ibid. p. 39.
18 Ibid. p. 39.
19 Ibid. p. 41.
20 Ibid. p. 40.
21 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1907) pp. 43–4.
22 Discussed in Chapter 1 of this book.
23 Sale, *The Koran*, p. iv.
24 Romantic Orientalism has been defined and explored most recently by Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996) and Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
25 These texts are variously considered in detail in Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism*, Leask, *British Romantic Writers*, Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients* and Smith, *Islam and English Literature*.
26 Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an*, p. 179.
27 Carlyle, *On Heroes*, p. 1.
28 Ibid. p. 44.
29 Ibid. p. 44.
30 Ibid. pp. 57 and 63.
31 Ibid. pp. 45 and 46.
32 Ibid. p. 52.
33 Ibid. pp. 54 and 53.
34 Ibid. pp. 69–70.
35 Ibid. pp. 64–5.
36 Ibid. p. 43.
37 Carlyle, *On Heroes*, p. 43.
38 Letter from Lord Lathom to Henry Irving quoted in Kristan Tetens, 'The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine's *Mahomet*' in Richard Foulkes ed., *Henry Irving: A Re-Evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) p. 59.
39 William Henry Quilliam, *The Faith of Islam, an explanatory sketch of the … tenets of the Moslem religion* (Liverpool: T. Dobb & Co., 1889) p. 3.
40 The naming of this event is a political act, and the title is disputed (some preferring the 'First War of Independence'), hence the quotation marks around 'Indian Mutiny'.
41 *The Morning Post*, Saturday, 3 October 1857, p. 4.
42 Noted in Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 5.

43 William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam, to the Era of the Hegira* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858) Vol. II, p. 81.
44 Ibid. Vol. II, p. 73.
45 Ibid. Vol. II, p. 90.
46 Ibid. Vol. II, p. 92.
47 *British Quarterly Review* (1872) quoted in Philip C. Almond, *Heretic and Hero: Muhammad and the Victorians* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1989) p. 9.
48 Aloys Sprenger quoted in Almond, *Heretic and Hero*, p. 9.
49 Khan's most famous essay was *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* of 1859 and was celebrated in his lifetime. He is, however, absent from Philip C. Almond's *Heretic and Hero.*
50 Syed Ahmad Khan Bahador, *A Series of Essays on the Life of Mohammed, and Subjects Subsidiary Thereto* (London: Trubner & Co., 1870) p. xvii. Khan argues that Muir's volume is better than Sprenger's biography of the prophet (of 1851), which is full of mistakes and 'what is still worse is, he has adopted so exaggerated a style, and his mind is so much preoccupied and warped by prejudice and bigotry' – p. xvi.
51 Ibid. p. xix.
52 Ibid. p. xv.
53 Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, p. 256.
54 Ibid. p. 18.
55 See note 2 to Preface of this book and David Farr's defence, 'Tamburlaine wasn't censored' in *The Guardian*, 25 November 2005.
56 Susanna Rustin, 'Salman's Children', *The Guardian*, 2 October 2010, p. 30. This also overlooks the prominent role domestic and international Muslim opposition played in stopping Henry Irving's production of Thomas Henry Hall Kane's play *Mahomet* in London in 1890. Tetens, 'The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine's *Mahomet*'.
57 Aamir Mufti, 'Reading the Rushdie Affair: An Essay on Islam and Politics', *Social Text* 29 (1991) 95–116, p. 113; Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London: Vintage, 2006) p. 93.
58 More detail on the 'Rushdie Affair' can be found in Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, *The Rushdie File* (London: Fourth Estate, 1989); Shahab Ahmed, 'Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic Verses', *Studia Islamica* 87 (1998) 67–124; Shabbir Akhtar, *Be Careful with Muhammad! The Satanic Verses Affair* (London: Bellew, 1989); M. M. Ahsan, '*The Satanic Verses* and the Orientalists', *Hamdard Islamicus* 5.1 (1982) 27–36. One primary factor in this establishment of a supposedly unchanging and authorised version of the Prophet Muhammad was the influence of Iran in the affair.
59 Klausen, *The Cartoons that Shook the World*, pp. 50–1.
60 See, for instance, the Christian evangelical pamphlets from Jack T. Chick: *Allah Had No Son* (Ontario: Chick Publications, 1994), *The Little Bride* (Ontario: Chick Publications, 2004) and *Men of Peace?* (Ontario: Chick

Publications, 2006). Free evangelical literature issued by far-right groups in the United States, such as the Chick pamphlets (some aimed specifically at children), are at the moderate end of this spectrum. One individual's struggle with differing contemporary conceptions of the Prophet Muhammad is related in Ed Husain's *The Islamist* (London: Penguin, 2007).

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